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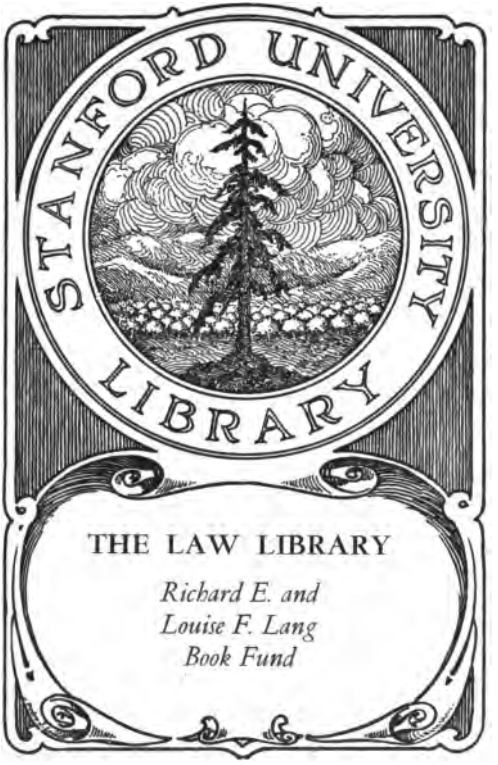

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MRS. BROWN

ON

THE TICHBORNE CASE.

BY

ARTHUR SKETCHLEY,

AUTHOR OF "THE BROWN PAPERS," "MRS. BROWN'S 'OLLIDAY OUTIN'S," "MRS. BROWN IN AMERICA," ETC.

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PREFACE.

EVERY one bein' a-talkin' about this 'ere Tichbung case, pre'aps there's a many as will say of me, "Wotever can she know about it, as is a foolish old gossipin' thing?" And I've 'eard say as there were a play hactor as took and spoke on me as a old cat the other night at the theayter, as certainly did 'urt my feelin's, afore sich a lot of people as all knows me; and the way as I'm badgered about like a shettlecock, as the sayin' is, and some a-sayin' as I'm wore threadbare, as is base falsehoods, for I'm sure there's my cloth pelice as I've 'ad over thirty year, as were a olive green, and made out of a ridin' 'abit, as looks wonderful in the shade, and often slips it on, even now, tho' terrible tight under the arms, as will break out, tho' altered frequent, and now sets werry tight to the figger, but not threadbare any more than my new Lion's

cloth, as shines like sattin, with a pannya behind, as is all the fashion.

Not as I wants no new fashions thro' a-preferrin' the old; partickler with the lovely clothes as I've got by me, as was all Lady Wittles' trooso, as she left me, as is a morone sattin, with a low body and short sleeves, as I jest slipped on one day for to show Miss Pilkinton 'ow it looked afore we quarrelled, as said I looked like Queen Wictoria in her coronation, with a white silver tissue turban and a bird of parrydise's tail a-hangin' down, as come too much over the face and tickled my nose, besides a obstructin' of my left eye.

But, law! wotever is this world but a mask of deceit? for if that Miss Pilkinton didn't go behind my back and tell Mrs. Striden as I looked like a prize 'og dressed out for Christmas; as were a base hact, arter borrerin' my garnet brooch, as looks like hemeralds, tho' not the same colour, as I 'ad to go afore the magistrate to get it back.

I'm sure the things as I've lent would fill a wollum, as the sayin' is; and for to think as that double-faced old curney, Mrs. Bulpit, should never 'ave sent me back my largest-sized clothes-basket, as I never shall forget a-fillin' with things when a movin', and were a-carryin' down stairs afore me, that weight as I thought would 'ave tore my harms

out, and 'ad busted out all the back of my gownd in liftin' of it up off the floor.

I got it down all right to the fust landin', where the young man were a-repairin' the window sash, and if he didn't take and step back at the moment, a-comin' in back'ards, with the steps on his shoulder, and come in contract with me as sent me flyin' down them stairs, jest as Brown's aunt were a-comin' up, poor thing, with a trayful of glass and chaney, as she thought I were a-goin' to pack on the fust floor, all thro' bein' that 'ard of 'earin', and I must say too fond of interferin', tho' a-meanin' well in the main, as the sayin' is.

The shock as it give 'er me a-comin' smack on to 'er clothes-basket fust, as reg'lar pulverized 'er and the chaney tòo, with that young man a-lettin' the steps slip on to the top of me, were enuf for to shake any constitution at seventy-eight, and never 'eld up 'er 'ead agin, as said she 'ad internal brooses all over, as they must 'ave been, for not a speck were aperient.

As the doctor said, nothink weren't to be done but keep her up; and so we did, and a great mussy too, for when at large a deal of trouble thro' bein' one of them as thought she were born for to set the world straight, as certingly were more than she or any one else could ever do with 'er neck, as she always laid to the 'andle of the clothes-basket, as

she said she felt a-workin' into 'er carroty hartery, and declared she were a-bleedin' to death, afore they could get me up off 'er; and certingly it give me a turn at fust, a-seein' 'er a-swelterin' in 'er gore, as turned out to be a bottle of furniture polish as 'ad broke in 'er neck.

But, law bless me! I were a deal more 'urt than 'er, and if it 'adn't been for opydildoc and 'ot flannins kep' constant rubbed in between my blade-bones, I don't believe as ever I should 'ave drawed my breath free agin.

But as to them as is my enemies, and says I'm wore out, I despises 'em, and goodness knows I pities and forgives 'em, thro' a-knowin' as it's only henvy as makes 'em speak agin me, the same as Mrs. Skerry, as ain't a bad 'art on the 'ole, but can't a-bear to see no one prosper escept 'erself, and says to Mrs. Opwell as said she were sure there were somethink conterband about them Browns, as I defies 'er or any woman to say, and would be searched willin' all over before any custom-'ouse officers in the world as 'ad proper fieldmales for to do it, tho' never would be served like poor Mrs. Elkins were a-goin' into France, and thro' bein' that lusty as she were a-landin' 'ad a iron skewer run into 'er on the landin' stage, as drawed blood, thro' them hignorant French not a-knowin' wot the 'umin form may come to, and a-thinkin' she were padded

there with smuggled lace, and never got no redress.

But, as I was a-sayin', parties as thinks as I don't know nothink about the Tichbung case is quite in the wrong, as I can prove thro' 'avin' read it, and 'ad words over it too, and seen them as is blood relations to the right man, but would rather lay their 'eads on the block than own to a butcher; as is quite ladies, bless you, tho' in course there's a woodin' leg in hevery family as the sayin' is, and would 'ave been in my own, only he never lived to wear it, poor feller; as were a fust cousin as suffered under a imputation thro' 'avin' of a white swellin', as come on thro' a-settin' with 'is legs tucked under 'im too close to 'is trade, as were a leather unmentionables maker, as is only wore now-a-days by them as goes a-'untin', tho' I remembers seein' many a pair walkin' about the streets with long garters when I were a gal.

But, as I says, there's a many gives their opinions a deal too free about this here Tichbung case, a-talkin' all manner as must confuse Judge and Jury too as ain't fair, and in my opinion must 'ave forgot all about the beginnin' on it by this time; and 'ard work to get a Jury, as I've 'eard lots run away the moment they 'eard on it, and was obligated to put up with eleven, thro' not bein' able to find twelve not all over Ingland; and as to the Scotch, they

wouldn't 'ave nothink to do with it, as knows the walue of time; and as to the Irish, they're that kind-'earted they'd 'ave been sure to let 'im off; and we all knows as the Welch ain't never allowed to 'ave no juries, and quite proper too, the willins, as took and acquitted that wretch as murdered 'is wife, a-return-in' for a werdict them orful words "Sarve 'er right." So Queen Wictoria give orders as they wasn't never to be employed no more for fear of the esample.

But all as I can say, wotever way it turns out, whether butcher or barrernite, as the sayin' is, I'm sure as my conshunce is clear, as 'ave always said, let the best man win, tho' in course I knows my own thoughts as I ain't a-goin' to throw my weight into the scales, as that impident young Walker says to me would settle it in a jiffey, as I give 'im one of my looks, and says, "That's more as any one could say of sich a skinny lincum-feedle as you, my boy," as made parties bust out larfin.

So in course, a-feelin' as I am a party as gives weight to wot I says, I'm werry careful; and as to bribin' me, I should like to see the feller as would dare to take and pamper with me if a witness, tho' in course I am not; but as to my own belief, that's my busyness, as I don't mean to let out till the Judge and Jury 'ave spoke, as knows my place with my betters, not as juries is always my betters, for there was that low-lived little Elvey, the greengrocer,

as only kep a coal-shed; he were on a jury once for settin' fire to a 'ouse, and a nice feller he were, for if ever a stable were destroyed thro' arsonic in this world, the same as Chicago, it were the one he rented of us; and as to a cow a-kickin' over a kerry-seen lamp of a Sunday night, why I don't believe it myself, unless it were a two-legged cow; not but what I must say as I always thought that Chicago a dangerous place with woodin' pavements, and too much wood altogether, as shows it ain't always true as store is no sore, for they'd a good many stores too much there, and am glad as we're a-rebuildin' it for them, poor things, as shows a feelin' 'art.

So don't let any one go and say as I've give my opinion over Tichbung, 'cos it's false'oods, as I 'ave not nor don't mean to, not but them as can't make up their minds did ought to 'ear wot I 'ad to say, as 'ave made it out that clear, as old Mrs. Berry says it's like a-listenin' to the Judge 'isself; but wot I am afeard on is as the Judge won't listen to me, for that's the wust of them lawyers, thro' bein' sich ones to talk theirselves, as they can't a-bear to let any one else 'ave a word, and that's why they're always a-puttin' them cross questions and crooked answers; but all as I've got to say is, whichever side wins, I'm sure I've give 'em both a fair 'earin', and never throwed up nothink to show which way the wind's a-blowin' as it's wot I con-

siders fair play all the world over, as is wot every body wants this 'ere Claimint to 'ave, and in course it ain't likely as 'im and them parties as 'elps 'im is a-tryin' for to do that little boy out of 'is property; but in course he may be foolish in his 'ead, and fancy 'isself a real barrernite, and talk that rational as he've been and persuaded others, jest like old Mr. Featherstone as kep' the "Blue Lion," as went 'rong in the 'ead, and fancied 'isself a grey-'ound, and would go about on all fours, tho' over eighteen stun, and put 'is 'ip out a-tryin' to leap over 'is four-poster, as he fancied were a five-bar gate. So there ain't no bounds to them fancies sometimes, as won't be the case with this 'ere trial, let's 'ope.

As to parties like Mrs. Trimley a-goin' on at me, and a-sayin' as it's 'ighly undecent of me for to go and settle the case afore the Judge and Jury 'ave spoke, why, it only shows their hignorance, as wouldn't stoop to no sich mean under'and ways; but that's no reason as I shouldn't give my opinion, and say wot I've got to say over it.

For many's the time I've been asked my opinion, partikler over sickness, and told young Flinders' mother as it was mumps as he'd got the moment I set eyes on 'im, and should no doubt 'ave told 'em wot were the matter with the Prince of Wales, if called in in time, as 'ad arf a mind to send Queen

Wictoria one of my three-bordered nightcaps as a pattern for to set up in, as she'd 'ave found a deal easier than 'er crown, tho' it is lined with fur, I've 'eard say, as is too 'ot for the 'ead; but now as the Prince is goin' on that well I can turn all my intentions to this 'ere Tichbung agin, as will 'ave a links eye on 'im, as the sayin' is; not as links is things you often see about now-a-days, tho' I well remember 'em bein' that useful in a fog; and certingly if ever any one were reg'lar fogged in this world, it must be them as 'ave got to do with this 'ere case, tho' I'm told as the Judge 'ave got a 'ead as clear as a empty bushel, as shows talents, as the sayin' is, and the Jury 'as got all their intelligences about 'em.

But yet that don't perwent me a-puttin' in a word in season, as no doubt it will last thro' many seasons; not as I believes it will go on till the last man, like that there fortygraft as I see, 'cos in course he'll be sharp enuf to collar the lot for 'isself and live 'appy ever arter, with no one left to 'ave no more disputes with 'im, as would be a quiet life, if not a solingtary one.

But all as I've got to say is as my conschience is clear, whichever way it goes, and if the Claimint's got anything to ask me, let 'im do it civil, and I'm all there to answer; and as to the little boy, I'm sure I'd do anythink in reason for 'im, as 'ave 'ad great esperience with children, tho' not one as

ever let 'em go on a-disputin' and a-'ranglin', as shows a nasty temper.

I do 'ope as justice will be thoroughly done both sides, or else they'll make a nice 'ash of it in the hend; and them as thinks as I'm a-tryin' for to defeat the hends on it, as the sayin' is, is lettin' of theirselves be denuded of their right senses, as warps their judgments.

MRS. BROWN ON THE TICHBORNE CASE.

I'M sure but for seein' of 'im before me constant at meals, I might as well be Brown's widder as 'is lawful wife, for he've got that ropped up in that there Tichbung case, as he ain't never got a newspaper out of 'is 'and, nor yet a word to throw at a dog, and as short as pie-crust, as the sayin' is, if you asked 'im a word, as I sometimes would, when he'd been a-readin' about it nearly all the evenin', week arter week.

It must 'ave been about the beginnin' of May, when it 'adn't been goin' on over two or three days, as I fust got 'im to say anythink about it; for I didn't like to ask 'im, thro' not knowin' but it were a diworce, as is things I don't 'old with, and never wants to 'ear nothink about, and in my opinion didn't ought to be allowed in the papers, as esposes too many private things; and when Mrs. Arbut, as did once used to live out 'Aggerston way, come and told me about her dorter bein' diworced, I told

'er plump and plain as I didn't consider it respectable.

"But," says she, "did a man ought to kick 'is wife with muddy boots, and tear 'er 'air out by the roots, and break three teeth of a comb out of 'er 'ead?"

"Now," I says, "Mrs. Arbut, one story is werry good till another's told, for," I says, "your dorter's 'usban', as is a young man I've knowed by sight in a-passin' the door twice a-day, thro' bein' in the Custom 'Ouse, in my opinion dressed above 'is station, and 'is 'air oiled as if he were a-goin' to cort not your dorter, but Queen Wictoria's, as I don't believe would 'ave let 'er dorter marry that there Markis if she'd see 'im in light kid gloves and shiny boots, with a flower in 'is coat in Nowember; but," I says, "that Flinders," as were 'is name, "always 'ad them uppish notions; and when I see 'im walk by with your dorter the fust Sunday arter they was married, I says, 'That won't last,' as was both as fine as 'orses; but," I says, "take my advice, and as they've fell out, let 'em fall in agin."

She says, "My dear gal will be killed, and I do wish as you'd jest go over and see her, for I'm that anxshus about 'er."

So I says, "I'll go in welcome this werry evenin'; but," I says, "not for to encourage 'er in no diworces."

Well, I went over, and there she were a-workin' at a baby's cap, and began a-talkin' about her dear Fred.

So I says, "Who may he be?"

"Why," she says, "my 'usban', in course."

"How," I says, "arter 'is a-kickin' on you and behavin' that shameful!"

"Oh!" she says, "that's all ma's nonsense, cos she come in one evenin' when I were in a bit of a pet, and asks me what that mud were on my dress, as I says Fred's boots, as 'ad trod on my gownd."

"But," I says, "didn't he tear out your 'air, then?"

She says, "No; 'im and me 'ad words about a chinyon as I wore, and I took it out and threw it across the room, as broke my teeth out of my back comb."

"Then," I says, "you don't want to be diworced?"

She says, "Rubbish! Who says I do?"

"Oh!" I says, "it's my fun;" 'cos I didn't want to make no mischief 'twixt 'er and 'er mother; but I did give Mrs. Arbut a good talkin' to on the quiet, and says, "You take care not to interfere, or you'll part a 'appy couple."

And I give the dorter a word or two about temper and estravagance as did 'er good; and the last time I 'eard on 'em they was as 'appy as the day's long, as the sayin' is, and got five.

In course, if a man be'aves like a willin, 'is wife may be drove from 'im; and if a woman forgets 'er dooty, and is a outcast, why, then, in course, a man will turn 'er out; not but wot in my opinion there is sure to be faults on both sides in them cases, 'cos it ain't nat'ral as a woman with a good 'usban' would suffer any other man to take the liberty for to make love to 'er; and if a 'usban' kep' a proper look-out arter 'is wife, he'd precious soon show any gent the door with the tip of his boot as he caught a-tryin' to spoon 'is wife, even if he was the Hemperor of Morocker 'isself.

So, when Brown says to me, one night arter supper, as there were a bit of evidence as I should like to 'ear, I says, "No, I thank you, Brown; I don't want to bother my 'ead with sich cases; and if she's the one as Mrs. Jarvis says is mad, let 'er be locked up, but not let out agin the same as that bonnetmaker by St. Paul's as murdered 'er two children thro' jealousy, and got off, arter bein' in confinement a month or two, thro' bein' called mad.

"I 'ave 'eard as she's quite 'erself agin now, but it's to be 'oped 'aven't got her recollections back, to remember as she took away them two innercent lives, as their blood must prey on 'er 'art to 'er dyin' day, I should think."

So Brown, he says, "When you've done a-clackin' away about your mad people, pre'aps you'll

listen, as it ain't no diworce case I'm talkin on, but all about rights and wrongs, as is a barrernite as 'ave been supposed to be dead many years ago, but 'ave turned up agin larger than life."

"Well," I says, "why ever shouldn't he, the same as Mungo Park or Robinson Crusoe, and lots as I've read about; and there was Mrs. Pilcher's son, as I knowed about myself, and lived in 'Igh Street, Poplar, as run away from 'is indentures thro' 'is master a-layin' it on to 'im with a leather strop, and they mourned 'im dead in 'is father's 'alls, as the sayin' is, as were a leather-dresser in Lim'us.

"Well, he 'ad been dead and berried 'isself—I mean the father—and 'er a widder over seven-and-twenty year, when one evenin', just atween the lights, as she were a-finishin' 'er tea, poor thing, a party comes to the door with a black beard down below 'is waist, and a poll parrot in a cage, and asked if she were livin' there; as didn't know 'is woice, nor yet the colour of 'is 'air, nor nothink, no more than Adam, but in course asked 'im to take a seat; and tho' he stopped there till she died, as was over nineteen years, and a good son to 'er, yet she told me with 'er own lips, in 'er last moments, as she weren't sure it were 'er son, nor never 'ad been.

"So, as he 'adn't nothing to gain by it thro' 'er

not bein' a barrernite, and 'er only a trifle to live on, as he made it up comfortable for 'er, there weren't no reason to doubt 'im, so in course he weren't moslested partikler, as she were a little flighty in 'er 'ead ever since the time as the 'ouse took fire where she were a-lodgin',. and only saved 'er life down one of them fire escapes as she got into 'ead fust, so come down a tremenjous shock with two injuns a-playin' full on 'er, as was enuf to give 'er water on the brain."

Says Brown to me, "'Owever you can always keep on maggin' about them long-winded old stories puzzles me, and yet never seems to know nothink about wot's a-goin' on round you."

I says, "'Cos I ain't got a 'usban' for to teach my young ideers 'ow to shoot; and as to callin' Mrs. Pilcher long-winded, why, she were that asmatic as she were obligated to 'ave parlours to avoid the stairs, and you could 'ear 'er breathe in the back garret with the wind in the east."

"Well," says Brown, "never mind 'er nor me neither, for if you don't care to 'ear I don't care to tell you."

"But," I says, "I do care to 'ear, and don't relish a-settin' 'ere evenin' arter evenin', and a-seein' you read in your shirt-sleeves without a word to throw at a dog, as the sayin' is; so let me 'ear about this 'ere barrernite."

He says, "It's a precious long story; but," he says, "I tell you wot it is, you might go down to Westminster 'All some day, and see about it for yourself, as is a-goin' on day arter day, and will be for months to come."

"Well," I says, "that I will; but if it's begun, whyever can't you tell me about the beginnin', 'cos else it'll be jest like a-beginnin' of a book at the second wollum, as is wot I can't a-bear."

"Well," he says, "there's somethink in that; but," he says, "it's a long story to tell; but," he says, "there's your old pal, Mrs. Jarvis, as I met the day before yesterday, as told me she 'ad knowed all the family from a gal, and 'er dorter and 'er 'ad read every word on it."

"Well," I says, "Brown, you knows werry well as I don't consider that woman a friend."

"Why," he says, "didn't you tell me yourself as you'd met 'er in a bus, and made it all up?"

"Yes," I says, "so far as a-shakin' 'ands goes, but not to visitin' terms."

"Well," he says, "I don't know nothink about your rows, and don't want to, but all I knows is as she told me you'd promised 'er faithful to come to tea, and they 've been a-lookin' out for you."

I says, "My word is my bond, as the sayin' is, and wasn't ever knowed to go back from, and I certingly must allow a-regardin' of Mrs. Jarvis,

a-beggin' and a-prayin' of me for to come to tea, as I did 'old out 'opes, tho' not a-fixin' day, yet I must say as it were my intentions to go, and," I says, "I've been a-promisin' myself to drop in on 'er these last five days thro' not a-wishin' to be wuss than my word, and a-knowin' as a wisit is a charity to 'er poor niece, as 'ave got the spine complaint, and lays on a board from mornin' till night and from night till mornin', and daren't turn for fear of its slippin' agin, as were all done thro' a bit of orange peel, not but wot in my opinion 'er back were always weak from the cradle."

It was the werry next day as I went over to see Mrs. Jarvis as lives in the Old Kent Road, as is 'er own 'ouse, and not chick nor child, but one dorter and this 'ere poor bed-ridden gal, as is called Phœbe, as Jarvis asked her to be friend with 'is dyin' breath, as took her in, like a true woman, without a word, and 'ave called 'er Aunt ever since, behind 'er back and afore 'er face, tho' no more a relation than I am, as is over seventeen years ago, and shows 'ow time flies.

They was both glad to see me, and all the more so 'cos the dorter 'ad been and got married, and they was alone; but when I told 'em I wanted to 'ear all about the Tichbung case, they'd got it reg'lar at their fingers' ends, for they mostly 'ad read out of the Sunday papers, as they wanted for to give

me a 'ole 'eap on to take 'ome ; as Mrs. Jarvis said there wasn't another livin' soul as she'd trust 'em to, thro' a bein' attached to the family, and a-meanin' to 'ave 'em filed.

But law I 'adn't no much occasions for the papers, 'cos they knowed the case by 'art, as were jest like readin' of a book to 'ear Mrs. Jarvis tell it, as said as once on a time there were a old anshent family, but singler in their ways, and one on 'em were that 'ard 'arted as he wouldn't never give nothink to the poor but what his good lady could crawl over on the ground, as got out of 'er dyin' bed to do it on her 'ands and knees, as the poor has injoyed ever since, and that's wot they calls the Tichbung Dole.

"Well," I says, "he must 'ave been a brute, and wotever was them as was nussin' of 'er about to let 'er do it, as did all ought to 'ave been tried for their lives, the fools, as were downright murder, the same as old Whitten, as would make his wife go down in 'er bed-gownd and draw the servants' beer, as struck to 'er chest and brought 'er to the werge of the grave ; and then there was Mrs. Gillet, as would rake the kitchin fire out with 'er own 'ands as upset the kittle on the 'ob, and that scalded 'erself, as she weren't able to put 'er foot to the ground for months, but outlived Gillet, as always meant to marry the barmaid when she were under ground.

Says Mrs. Jarvis, "Never mind Gillet, 'cos if you wants to 'ear about this 'ere Tichbung, you must listen."

I says, "I'm all attention, and only throwed in a word about Gillet thro' 'is fust wife bein' a cripple."

"Oh, bother 'im and all the rest on it," says she, a-gettin' irritable over it.

So I says, "Pray don't put yourself out, only," I says, "I thought as I might throw a light on it."

Says Mrs. Jarvis, "Do keep your lights to yourself till you've 'eard it, that is if you wants to 'ear about it."

"Why," I says, "I comed a-purpose, so please go on."

"Well," she says, "you see it 'appened as this 'ere barrernite married——"

"Ah!" I says, "I see, a second time; that's jest wot I espected, a-feelin' sure as that poor soul wouldn't never get over it arter a-crawlin' on the ground out of 'er bed."

"Bless the woman!" said Mrs. Jarvis, "I'm a-tellin' you about the father of this 'ere Claimint, for it was 'im, and not that werry 'ard-'arted old ancient barrernite as took and married."

"Ah!" I says, "I don't 'old with them old fellers a-marryin'."

"Oh!" says she, "it were not as he were so

werry aged, but didn't ought to have married a forriner."

"Ah!" I says, "that is bad certingly, for there never can't be that there proper understandin' between two parties, one a-thinkin' French and the other Inglish; and a nice confusion for the poor children, as must 'ave their 'eads in a reg'lar muddle, stuffed full of both them langwidges; but," I says, "go on."

"Well," she says, "I can't say whether that were a 'appy marriage or not, but any'ow there was two boys as was both pretty wild in their ways."

"Ah!" I says, "no doubt always a-playin' Inglish and French together all over the place, as is the way as them young Larkins pulled the drawin'-room chairs in 'arf, and one on 'em flew slap into the fire-place back'ards, and burnt a bald place in the back of 'is 'ead agin the bars, while the other smashed a chiney wase into the lookin'-glass as it stood before, under a gold-legged table."

"Well," says Mrs. Jarvis, "one of them boys he didn't do no good at school, nor at 'ome neither, and arter that went abroad."

"Ah!" I says, "that's wot some will do, jest like my Joe—not as ever he give me a moment's sorrers except partin' with 'im, as were a twister to a mother's 'art, whether French or Inglish; for I

will say that of the French as I've knowed 'em good mothers, tho' in course not the same to bring up a family as Inglish, yet no doubt did their best."

Says Mrs. Jarvis, arter a bit, "It ain't no use our takin' up our time, as we meets so seldom, in talkin' all over this 'ere matter, and I wants to tell you about Matilder's marridge, so I'll make up a parcel of the papers and the book as is rote all about it, and you can look it over, and then you'll be even with Brown."

"Well," I says, "that I shall be glad to be, for," I says, "tho' a good 'usban' in the main, I must say as he do aggrawate sometimes with 'is larnin', as 'ave read almost everythink as is in the British Museum, and can remember it all the same as little Sam Pindler over in 'Merryker, as could do all the other boys' sums in his 'ead."

Not as I considers it a good sign myself in a child to be so extra clever, and so I told 'is mother that night as he were took with the fits, as I do believe nothink but bladders of ice to his temples ever got 'im thro', but always will 'ave a impediment in 'is speech arter, as come from 'is thoughts a-flowin' over too quick for 'is brain to keep up with them, as in course affected 'is tongue, as I always thought were a judgment on Pindler's pride,

as said he was the most cleverest child in creation, as is them blowin' 'Merrykin ways of talkin', jest as if 'Merryker was all the world, and a deal else; besides, when we know it's only a quarter as were found out by accident thro' a ship a-runnin' aground on it, thro' not a-keepin' a good look out.

"Well, then," says Mrs. Jarvis, "I tell you wot it is, you'd better come along with me and 'ear the case yourself in Westminster Common Please Court."

I says, "That must be a 'ard court for to be a judge in, 'cos in course they can't please everybody, and all them as goes to law thinks as they're right."

"Ah!" she says, "I pities that judge as sets there a-perspirin' in 'is wig, and them lawyers too; I wonder they don't leave 'em off, that I do."

"Ah!" I says, "you aint been in 'Merryker, else you wouldn't talk like that, for I never see anyone look more meaner than them 'Merrykin judges a-settin' there jest like common people."

"Well," says Mrs. Jarvis, "a neighbour is a-comin' in to set along with Phœbe to-morrer, so if you'll meet me in front of Westminster 'All at ten precise we'll see if we can't get in."

I says, "I'm safe to be out early, for Brown's

a-goin' off by seven o'clock, and I gets a 'bus to the Mansion 'Ouse, and then underground all the way any time arter eight, so it's a bargin."

I didn't breathe a syllabul to Brown, a-thinkin' to take 'im by surprise at night by a-knowin' all about Tichbung over supper, and were down at Westminster by 'arf-past nine like clockwork.

When I come for to look about me, I never did see a place more changed; why, it were like coming up from my grave when I got out of that underground railway and see that new Westminster Bridge and the Thames Embankment all over the place, as 'ave carried away Manchester Buildin's, as I well remembers a lady as kep' a lodgin'-'ouse there for Members of Parlyment, as 'ad Daniel O'Connel 'isself for a lodger, as always said 'is prayers in a laudible woice, and spilte 'er drorin'-room carpet with spittin' out grapes.

But only to think as they've gone and moved Sir Thomases 'Ospital from London Bridge, as Queen Wictoria opened with 'er own 'ands, and done away with Pallis Yard and one side of Bridge Street.

So I asks a perliceman wherever they'd move Pallis Yard to, as I remembers with a 'ackney coach stand, as smiled, and said it were the new entrance to Westminster 'All, with cabs for the members.

Says I, "That's the place I want, Westminster 'All is, if it's the same as where they're a-tryin' that there Tichbung."

He says, "Cross the road, and go thro' them iron railin's, and you'll see the entrance."

I says, "That's where I'm to meet my friend as is goin' to get me in."

"Then," says he, "you'll 'ave a nice squeeze for it, for all the world and 'is wife is there."

"Well, then," I says, "I wish you a good day," as were that perlite, for he would see me across the road, as he said as they'd been obligated to put a semmypore up in the middle on, for to save parties from bein' run over.

I says, "Whatever is a semmypore?"

"Why," he says, "that big lamp-post as 'ave got arms as stretches out."

"Oh," I says, "indeed! and I suppose would ketch any one up as it see in danger?"

He only give a smile, and thanked me for a glass of ale as I give 'im, and on I goes, and jest as the clock were a-strikin' ten I were at the hentrance.

There were Mrs. Jarvis all of a flurry and a fluster, sayin', "Come on, we're full late, and there's such a hawful crush."

"No," she says, "but 'im and the rest 'ave come out for lunch, and now'll be the time to get in, as the Court 'll be pretty nigh empty."

But law, I seed with 'arf a eye as there were lots up to the same little game as we was, and a-waitin' for 'em to open the Court agin, as the old gent told us were bein' aired a-bit.

I do think as the crowd was wuss than afore, as drove and pushed me up and down like a shettle-cock, as the sayin' is.

Mrs. Jarvis, she were a-goin' about a-askin' parties questions, as seemed that interested about it as never were nothink like it.

So when she come up to me ag'in, I says, "My good soul, bless your 'art we shan't never get in 'ere, Mrs. Jarvis, leastways, not with a rag on our backs, and I ain't a-goin' to 'ave everythink as I've got on tore to ribbins, as were a werry beautiful light burage, as were yaller and blue stripes, as Brown said were a Tomfool of a thing at my time of life, but looked werry dressy, partikler with a white musling Maryhantonette over it, as crossed over my bussum, a-fastenin' behind in a bow, with a werry natty little bonnet, as were full of rosebuds and daisies.

I were that nice dressed thro' a-knowin' as I were a-goin' where I should see and be seen, as the sayin' is.

So I says to Mrs. Jarvis as I would not like to go into that crowd, as says to me in a whisper, "Come this way," and goes up some steps thro' a door as led into a passage, but the moment as we moved, parties come a-rushin' arter us, and I got drove up a narrer passage, and got that wedged as move I couldn't.

Well, there was one lady as took and fainted, and another says to me, "Stand back, can't you."

I says, "Certingly not; 'owever am I to?"

Says she to a fellar as were with her, "This old woman is stiflin' me, and won't move."

I says, "I can't;" no more I couldn't, for parties in gettin' that faintin' lady out 'ad been and jammed me tight agin the wall, leastways this 'ere fieldmale, as were a-complainin' she were next the wall, jest agin a doorway, and me next 'er.

Certingly the squeezin' in were dreadful, and that party give a scream, and I 'eard a woice say, "I'll soon make 'er move, and jest then I got a punch on the soft part of my arm, as made me roar out agin, and I give such a plunge like as I think that woman won't never forget me, for I reg'lar knocked the breath out of 'er body.

Says a man, a-'ollerin' out, "Perlice, here's a old woman a-murderin' us in this corner."

I says, "Let me out, as 'ave been insulted gross, and shall go off in a minnit myself."

Well, some'ow parties made way for me, and one give me a pull and another a push, till I were shoved and drove out into the great 'all agin, and set down on the steps all of a whirl in my 'ead and my clothes nearly off my back, and it's a mussy as I weren't a bein' took to the 'ospital on a shetter, the same as thousands of others as 'ad been a-tryin' to get in.

Leastways, so a lady told me as were pretty nigh 'arf killed 'erself, and did not ought to 'ave been there at all, thro' bein' that delicate as were quite the lady, and told me a deal about that there case as I 'adn't never 'eard afore, and about the young lady as is the widder of the other brother, and got a nice little boy as would be brought up proper.

"Ah!" I says, "that's wot them as is rich did ought to be, or else," I says, "they're a cuss and not a blessin' to everybody, and themselves into the bargin."

"Yes," says the lady, "she's a 'onerable family, and that proper behaved and good, as they wouldn't willin'ly go for to 'arm a fly, let alone want to do this 'ere feller out of 'is rights, if they was 'is rights, but would be the fust to give 'em up to 'im, if they didn't know as he were a impostor."

"Well," I says, "time will show, mum, for I 'ave 'eard of sich things as there ain't no knowin' whose impostors and who ain't; for there was a man as I've 'eard on as took and deserted 'is wife and family, and only went next door but one to live, and would never 'ave been 'eard on agin, only arter seven years she give 'im up for dead, and were goin' to marry agin, as were more than the real 'usban' could stand, so he jest dropped in and forbid the banns, as were the third time of askin', with the weddin' breakfast ordered and 'er clothes all made, as were a-comin' out strong as a bride, tho' past fifty."

Then I wishes that lady good-day and well thro' it, and 'ome I goes pretty nigh tired to death, and a nice figger, and wouldn't say a word when Brown fust come in about me 'avin' gone there, for he is such a man to jeer.

I think he were more fuller of that case that night nor ever, not as he would say whether he were the man or whether he were not, for that's Brown all over, as will always give every man a chance, and says to me, "All this 'ere is werry well till we 'ears the other side."

"But," I says, "Brown, he must be the man or he must not, and any fool can see that."

"But," says Brown, "he might be a impostor."

"But," I says, "'is own mother must know 'im, surely."

Says Brown, "She's been and died."

"But," I says, "surely she indemnified 'im afore she died."

"Yes," says Brown, "but some says as she were werry weak and old."

"But," I says, "she must 'ave 'ad the strength to know 'er own child, 'owever old."

"Ah!" he says, "it's a rum story, and reminds me of one as I once 'eard told by a seaman as knowed the parties."

I says, "Wotever were that?"

"Why," he says, "about a young feller as went out to them forrin parts, and was reported dead for over twelve years, and then turned up with only 'is grandmother livin', as said she thought he must be 'er grandson, 'cos he'd 'rote 'er a werry nice letter from Gibraltar a month afore.

"Well, that young man, he got 'is father's farm and a good bit of property from 'is sister's 'usban', as were dead, and were a-livin' on it when he were took ill; and feelin' 'isself a-dyin', made a clean breast on it, as were that he'd been and sailed in the same wessel with that other young man as were the right un, and as like 'im as two peas; so he got that intimate with 'im as to learn all about 'is family

and friends; and when they was up the country somewheres in a wild out-of-the-way place, he took and murdered that young man and got all 'is papers and hevery think, and come over arter a time and passed 'isself off for 'im, and not only took in the old grandmother, but lots of neighbours and friends, and wouldn't never 'ave been found out but for 'is conscience a-troublin' 'im, as it's well it did, so as not to die with a lie on his lips."

"Ah!" I says, "and to think of 'im a murderin' the other poor feller."

"Ah!" says Brown, "the other brought it on 'imself thro' bad behaviour, as might 'ave stopped at 'ome and been respectable, not as 'is father ever was afore 'im, so he 'adn't no much example."

I says, "That's the way with a good many as goes abroad, and that's why them places is so wild in their ways, for," I says, "talk about savages," I says, "I'm sure they can't be arf so bad as many of them white men as goes over a-pretendin' for to civilize them."

"Ah!" says Brown, "that's right, that is."

"But," I says, "I think if any was but to see this 'ere Tichbung, as is overgrowed frightful, could tell in a minnit, by speakin' to 'im, whether he were a gentleman or not; leastways I'm sure any one could as knows wot gentlefolks is."

"Well," says Brown, "you'd better go and try to get in."

So I took and told as I 'ad been and tried.

"Ah!" says he, "I'm told it's a tremenjous squeeze, and for my part I'd rather read it quiet, for them lawyers do twist and turn a thing about so, as you werry often can't tell wot to make on it."

I says, "Right you are, for it's a awful squosh for nothink; and as to law, why, I'm sure that time when I persecuted that gal for stealin' my black lace wail and a pair of new boots, that lawyer chap made me contradict myself flat, and got the gal off, and the judge told me I did ought to be ashamed of myself, tho' it come 'ome to 'er, a 'ussey, for she were took up and got seven years for smashin' within six months; and tho' I rote that judge a note, leastways got Sam Barnes to do it, a-tellin' 'im as he ought, if a gentleman, to 'polergize, I never 'eard no more on it, and don't suppose I ever shall any more than get my boots and wail back, as she might as well 'ave sent me the ticket for the wail, as walued it thro' 'avin belonged to Lady Wittles, as did used to wear it 'erself over a Leghorn bonnet, and looked like a queen in it, as were jest my figger."

Mrs. Jarvis she were as good as 'er word a-sendin' me that book, as told all about this 'ere son a-callin' 'isself a claimint, and a-turnin' up

sudden arter bein' away ever so long, and about 'is ma a-knowin' 'im, tho' aged, tho' not as far as I could make out, from the werry fust time she set eyes on 'im, as seems to me sing'ler, if she were right in 'er 'ead, for I'm sure I should 'ave knowed my Joe in a moment as soon as he spoke with a smile; but then pre'aps this party did not smile like my Joe, as shows as he've got a wide diwision between 'is two front teeth, as some says is a sign as you'll die rich; not as I ever gives no attentions to them things any more than to parties 'avin' moles, as they says is a sign of good luck; and certingly Susan Markem 'ad 'em over 'er arms and one on the upper lip, as married a carcuss butcher and rode in 'er own carridge afore she died, and 'er father, old Snape, were in the marine-store line, and went about like a beggar, and some say couldn't never 'ave left twelve thousand pounds behind 'im by fair means, and certingly the perlice were down on 'im once or twice to my certing knowledge, but never could bring it 'ome to 'im.

Well, the more as I read about that there Tichbung case, the more I didn't understand it, and at last I says to Brown, one evenin', "Is he a bein' tried for 'is life?"

He says, "Bless the woman, no! it ain't a felony?"

I says, "Ain't it? Then it did ought to be—a

comin' to turn a widder and a orfin out of their rights."

"Why," he says, "don't you see, if he should turn out to be the right man, then his brother's widder ain't no claim to it, nor the child neither."

"Well then," I says, "I considers as that brother be'aved werry un'ansom' in marryin' that lady without a-sayin' as he'd got a brother over in Horsetrailier as might turn up any time, partickler as he was a-goin' to die isself."

Says Brown, "Don't you see as they all thought this one were dead, thro' bein' drownded at sea."

Well, then, I says, "Were he drownded, or were he not? 'Cos, if drownded, that settles the pint."

"Whyever don't you think," says Brown, "afore you speaks? Why ain't all the argyment a-turnin' on whether he were drownded or whether he got ashore, as this man says he did?"

"Well," I says, "and why not like Robinson Crusoe, as went a-sailin' about on a raft, as I do like to read about, on 'is uninabited Highlands, with nobody but Man Friday, as kept the 'ouse tidy, as my old grandfather did used to sing about, thro' bein' a cheerful party at eighty-three, over a little drop 'ot?"

Says Brown, "Don't go a-driftin' into your grandfather, but jest listen to reason, as is why

this 'ere Tichbung 'ave come forward, thro' sayin' as he 'ave escaped aboard of a wessel."

"Why, then," I says, "that settles the pint; cos, of course, when picked up a-floatin' on a raft or anythink—as I 'ave 'eard say a 'encoop will do—would naturally tell every one who he were. So I considers that pint settled."

Says Brown, "You'd better go and tell the judge and jury so."

I says, "That's right, jeer away."

He says, "I ain't a-jeerin'." But he says, "Remember, if you are a-goin' down to that court, as it's moved into the Queen's Bench——"

"What!" I says, "the prisin over the water, close agin the church, in the Burrer?"

"No," says Brown, "Westminster 'All."

"Well," I says, "they've pretty nigh turned the place upside down; but I never thought as they'd turn the Burrer into Westminster 'All; but," I says, "go I will, if it's only for to see fair play. Cos I do not see as that Claimint should not 'ave 'is rights, nor yet should be run down, because rusty; and I'm sure wot I've read about the way as that 'Turney-Gin'ral is a-goin' on at 'im, bear-batin' is a fool to it."

"Well," he says, "old gal, go on; but," he says, "remember as you must be'ave in court, or they'll commit you."

I says, "Thank you, Mr. Brown, for a-teachin' me manners, as am thankful to say as I've been brought up decent, and knows as a court of justice is like a church, as everyone takes off their 'ats in out of respect, cos in course justice is a thing as everyone respects, but werry few ever gets."

"Ah!" says Brown, "partikler now-a-days, when arter a man's been tried and left for death by judge and jury, gets tried over agin by a lot of parties as rites to the papers, and says as the jury 'ave all signed a petition for mercy, cos they don't believe as ever he meant to commit murder."

So I says to Brown, "They're a nice lot for a jury, as finds the man guilty and then says arterwards as they didn't think as he were."

Says Brown, "Things won't never work right, old gal, till they gets you at the 'ead of affairs."

I says, "It's all werry fine to larf and jeer, Mr. Brown, but," I says, "I'd undertake to manage a deal better than some does, for," I says, "look at the way they've been a-managin' the navy, and the army ain't much better; and as to the Church, why it's enuf to make a cat larf both sides of 'er mouth to see the way as them parsons goes on."

I says, "It won't last much longer not any on it, for," I says, "they've been and broke up the navy and sold up the army; and they'll put down the Church, as I must say as I did used to look up to

when parsons was parsons, as looked that noble, and the bishops come in grand carriages all blowed out in a wig and lawn sleeves; but now, bless you, there's a good many parsons as is werry common in their ways, and don't believe in nothink partikler, so in course puzzles them as sets under 'em frightful; and that's 'ow it is as the Church is a-goin' to the bad, and I 'ears as they've been and turned St. Paul's into a school."

Says Brown, "Wotever do you mean?"

"Why," I says "they're a-teachin' 'istory there, cos they found it were no use a-tryin' to teach religion, as I considers werry dreadful, cos in course 'istory's werry well in its way, but I'm sure a 'orrid bad esample, and won't make anyone any better, nor yet be a comfort to no one in sickness nor trouble."

Well, I never did, 'ow time goes by, and seemed to go quicker than ever, for 'ow or other I kep' a-puttin' off a-goin' down to Westminster day arter day to see arter that there Tichbung business, till one day Brown says to me, "If you don't go this week and see that trial of Tichbung's, you'll not see it."

I says, "Wot, have they finished it?"

"No," says he; "but them lawyers is a-goin' off for their wacation."

"Wot," I says, "afore their work's done, that's pretty goings on; and wotever's to be done

with the judge and jury, let alone the pris'ner at the bar."

"Oh!" he says, "they'll be off till next Nowember."

"Wot," I says, "and not be locked up till they agrees, so as not for any one to be a-tamperin' with 'em?"

Says Brown, "Wot are you a-knockin' your 'ead agin; why, that's only where they can't agree in their werdict."

"Well," I says, "that's wot they can't do now, else they'd give it to one on 'em."

He says, "They can't do that till they've 'eard both sides."

"Well," I says, "I wish 'em luck; for to 'ave to carry all these 'ere things in their 'eads from now to Nowember is enuf to drive any one crazy; but," I says, "I must see 'em for myself afore they break up."

The werry next day, jest as I were ready to start for Westminster, in who should come but Mrs. Jarvis's married dorter, in the name of Rowlin's, to say as 'er mother 'ad been and made a fool of 'erself and got married agin to a reglar radical in the name of Bewlay.

I says, "Wotever made 'er do it?"

"Oh!" she says, "I don't know; but," she says, "that ain't the wust on it, for she were mar-

ried, and went off to Margate the day afore yesterday, and left poor little Phœbe werry unwell with a bad 'eadache, as 'ave turned to a fever, and the doctor thinks badly on 'er."

I says, "'Ave you telegrafted to your mother?"

She says, "Yes, and she 'ave telegrafted to me—'Send for Mrs. Brown.' So I've come over in a cab to fetch you."

So in course there weren't no goin' to Westminster for me that day; and over I went close agin Lambeth Walk, and the moment I see poor Phœbe I see as it were a bad case.

So I sends for another doctor as I knowed, as come in and said as there weren't no 'opes, and true 'is words proved, for that poor dear gal died that werry night, two 'ours arter Mrs. Bewlay, leastways Mrs. Jarvis, come up from Margit, as jest knowed 'er, and died a-thankin' 'er arter she'd 'ad the clergyman there, as she would 'ave thro' bein' the Irish perswasion; and a 'appy release, as I soon found out when I see that Bewlay—a pimply nosed beast, as I dried up for a darin' to make some sneery remarks about that there clergyman.

For I says, "If them's your sentiments," I says, "you go and talk 'em to your pot-companions, for," I says, "if you comes 'ere insultin' the dead like that, I'll jest take you by the nape of your neck and bundle you downstairs."

I'd 'ave done it, too, in two minutes; and so he seemed to think, for he sneaked out of the room, and went and told 'is wife, as come up to me a-askin' why I insulted 'er 'usban'.

I says, "I ain't a-goin' to 'ave no argyments over 'im, but," I says, "if you don't live to rue the day as you went to church with 'im, my name ain't Martha; so," I says, "as I can't be no more use, I wishes you a good-day," and out the place I walks.

It felt that pleasant out-a-door a-goin' along, as made me think as I'd walk about, and werry soon found myself on Westminster Bridge.

So I says, "Westminster 'All can't be far off." No more it wasn't, sure enuf, and soon I got there, and in I walks, as is a noble place sure enuf; but I didn't see no one about but a perliceman, as I goes up to and asks wherever were the Tichbung case a-bein' tried.

He says, "Come to a close yesterday; won't be no more on it till next Nowember."

I did feel wexed at missin' of it, but not surprised thro' Brown a-warnin' me; not but wot I felt I'd been a-doin' of my dooty, as I 'opes as I ever shall do, whether he's Tichbung or whether he ain't.

So went 'ome by the bus to Brown, a-leavin' of my things as I took over to that Mrs. Bewlay's to

come by parcel's delivery, as ain't arf so conwenient as the express over in 'Merryker, as'll take your things anywheres straight from the railway, and get 'em 'ome as fast as you, pretty nigh.

Well, when I got 'ome, the fust thing as Brown told me was about goin' to the Continong with 'im, as in course I did, thro' bein' 'is lawful wife; and a nice time we had on it, as I ain't a-goin' to tell you all about now, but would fill a book of itself, as we went ever so far, and see that Prince and Princess of Wales over in Germany, as took me that aback for to come on 'em that suddin at Baden-Baden, and says to Brown, "That's 'im, as sure as eggs is eggs," and so it were; and then to think as when we got 'ome and 'adn't 'ardly settled, when we 'ad to go off up into Scotland, as is all werry well in summer, but ain't good winter-quarters, and no wonder as them as lives there all thro' the year should take to a dram in the winter.

We 'adn't been 'ome but for a day or two, when who should come in but Mrs. Bewlay, as told me she were a-livin' close by, but as the Tichbung case were a-goin' to begin agin in a day or two, she should go and stop along with 'er married dorter, as lived close agin Westminster Abbey, "'Cos," she says, "I shall watch it close this time." So she says, "Will you come along?"

I says, "I certingly will; but," I says, "I must

tell you plain as I don't care for your new 'usban'."

She says, "No more don't I, but," she says, "he spends all 'is time in public-'ouses, so I don't see much on 'im, as is a blessin', and 'ave moved 'ere to be near you."

I could 'ave said "Thankee for nothink," but didn't wish to 'urt 'er feelin's.

So, when Brown come 'ome I told 'im as I were a-goin' down to court for to 'ear the Tichbung case from the beginnin', from the very next Toosday.

He says, "Go on, old gal, and I do 'ope as you'll get 'em to settle it."

"Well," I says, "jokin' apart, there's a many pints as I could say something about."

He says, "Don't you go a-makin' too free with your pints, as'll get you into trouble."

"Oh!" I says, "don't you be afraid; I knows my way about."

It were the werry next day arter that, as in talkin' of it over serous, I says to Mrs. Bewlay, as were a-goin' Westend-wards together, when we met in the omblebus, I says, "I don't believe as ever the plagues of Egypt, with all their faults, as 'ave been there myself, and knows as they've never got rid of the flies, as would defy catch-'em-alive-ohs! and no amount of beer and sugar in sarcers wouldn't keep under. I don't believe as ever they

was more tormented than me with this 'ere Tichbung case, as knows it to the tip of my fingers' ends, as the sayin' is, thro' Brown a-readin' of it reg'lar to me every night all last summer arter supper, when tho' a-feelin' drowsy, yet were wide awake enuf to that, and must say I feels a interest in it now, as I didn't at fust, and do 'ope as we shall get into court next Toosday, if it's only jest to see a infant at the bar in the eye of the law, as 'ave got the property, and in course we all knows possession is nine pints; but, law! what's that, as them laywers would take and swaller it all up and look round for more."

Says Mrs. Bewlay to me, "I don't think as they'll have the hinfant in court hevery day, as would be too much for 'is tender 'ears."

I says, "Mum, you'll escuse me," I says, "but," I says, "I 'ave not read it myself, nor yet 'eard it read over and over agin, not to understand it; and ketch them lawyers a-carin' for any one. Why, bless you, when they gets a-talkin', they don't mind whether your ears is tender or not, but they'll bore 'em thro' and thro, as the sayin' is."

"Well," she says, "me and my married dorter, as is jest downstairs agin arter 'er fust, 'er and me 'as read it more reg'lar than ever, thro' bein' two lone women, as wotever else can you call 'er, thro' bein' a commercial's lady, as is Rowlins' line; and

as to Bewlay, he've been as good as dead to me ever since he took to pollytics, and don't want Queen Wictoria to rain no more."

"Ah!" I says, "mark my words if he don't come to a bad end," as never could a-bear them demmygods myself, as I don't consider good Christshuns to want to overthrow heverything like a hearthquake, as is always a wisitation the same as Lisbon, where the sweet wine and the oranges comes from, and all in a single night; but," I says, "if Bewlay were a 'usban' of mine he shouldn't go to them low-lived meetin's if I 'ad to 'ide 'is clothes."

"Law!" she says, "that wouldn't never stop 'im, for I do believe he'd go and speak at them meetin's, if drove to a state of natur'."

"Then," I says, "the perlice would collar 'im, and a taste of prison would soon bring the poor denuded man to a better mind, as the sayin' is."

Says she, "That's wot I always says to 'im, as I 'opes he'll come to a better mind."

I says, "If it wasn't for this 'ere bus a-joltin' so tremenjous, I could pretty soon show you 'ow I could set 'em all right over that there Tichbung case; but," I says, "I may as well take adwantage of the assfelt as we're a-goin' over now, as runs as smooth as a glove, but dreadful slippy for the 'orses, as did ought to be shod accordin', Brown says;

but," I says, "that's impossible, 'cos it isn't as if it were all assfelt, but 'owever could they stop and change a 'orse's shoes whenever they come to a bit on it off the stones; but," I says, "let's make 'ay while the sun shines, and I'll give you my opinion about this 'ere claimint, thro' a-knowin' all about 'im now, from the werry fust."

"Law," says she, "then why ever don't you go into court, and indemnify 'im afore 'em all."

I says, "Mrs. Bewlay, don't you try to run afore you can walk, nor be down anyone's throat in such a way, just like Brown, as ain't good manners."

She mumbled a something, but jest then we run on to the stones agin, so I really could not make 'er understand, for she kep' a-pullin' me up short, jest for all the world like the 'Turney-Gin'ral did the claimint, and tho' they calls im a gin'ral, I don't consider a good one at all myself, but in course he's got 'is notions in 'is head the same as the rest on us.

But wot put me out with Mrs. Bewlay were 'er a-makin' up 'er mind as this 'ere claimint, as they calls 'im, is the man; as she would 'ave it, a-sayin' as it weren't likely as he'd write them letters to 'is ma, all about 'is 'ealth, and all them partiklers, if he 'adn't been her son, as nobody else wouldn't care about, tho' in course she'd feel a interest in like, as any mother would, but not nobody else.

So I says, "That don't prove nothink; there's many as 'ave the same constitutions, and yet ain't the same parties, for jest look at me and Mrs. Cookson, as both on us turns faint at the sight of blood, and neither on us can't abear eels, but no more relations than me and Adam, as the sayin' is.

"And as to tellin' parties by marks and moles, and sich like, why, there was my Joe marked with a mulberry on the left 'ip, and so was Sam Manders, and no more blood between 'em than a brickbat or a lamp-post.

"No," I says, "Mrs. Jarvis, leastways Bewlay, I would say, you can't judge by them appearances, as nobody didn't ought to, any more than poor Mrs. Clisby, as married Clisby with a 'air lip and a clump foot, as deserted 'er base the year of the comet, and weren't never 'eard on agin, tho' a fellar did turn up arter seventeen year, as 'ad them same blemishes about 'im, and said as he were Clisby, but were found out thro' not 'avin' one finger gone on the left 'and, as Clisby 'ad 'is chopped off with a cleaver when a-servin' of 'is time near Whitechapel Church. So arter that I always says it's werry easy for a man to say as he's your 'usban', but let 'im prove it by 'is jintes, the same as Mr. Gull, the 'atter, as' ad a glass eye, as nobody couldn't find out, -thinkin' it a nat'ral squint, till it fell out one evenin'

into 'is tea-cup, thro' a fit of sneezin', as nearly frightened 'is wife to death."

It was ever so long afore she would believe he were the same 'usban' as she'd set down to tea with till 'is mother and two aunts were fetched, as knowed about 'is losin' 'is eye in boyhood, thro' a-fencin' with 'is cousin and two toastin' forks, as is games I never would allow in my family, any more than squirtin' things in the face for fun, as is low-lived I considers, and that were 'ow it were found out, as Miss Pilkinton painted, at a Christmas party, thro' Billy Malins, a young hurchin, a-shootin' a pea-shooter full of tea slap in 'er face, as were 'is ideas of fun, as 'is father took and warmed 'im well for in the back-yard, as give 'is mother the sterrics, and broke up the party.

Says Mrs. Bewlay to me, "Well, I'm a-gettin' down 'ere close by, as is Cherrin' Cross, but," she says, "you ain't told me much about the Tichbung case arter all, and if you would come over, and see me and Kesiah, it would be a downright charity, and she'd like to 'ear about it."

"Well," I says, "I dare not promise for a day or two, but most certingly will, sooner or later, as the sayin' is."

I says to Brown that next Sunday night over supper, I says, "I can't rest till I gets into that court and hears all as them parties 'as got to say

about this 'ere claimint, as they calls 'im, and get in I will."

Says Brown, "You'll be reg'lar squashed agin, for they're a-goin' to be in a smaller court now, so if you goes a-tryin' of it on, look out, partickler sich weather as this is, as will give you dredful cold them hard frosts as we had about Nowember."

"Well," I says, "where's there's a will there's a way, and I'm sure I've got the will, so no doubt shall find out the way."

"Now," says Brown, "you look out as you don't get your pocket picked, nor yet robbed in no other way."

I says, "You'll escuse me, Mr. Brown," I says, "but teach your grandmother to suck eggs, as the sayin' is. Don't you think as I've lived over fifty years in this world, and don't know 'ow to take care of myself among them lawyers, as, if molested, would apply to the judge 'imself to purtect me agin 'em."

"Well," says Brown, "wotever you do, don't you go a-makin' none of your remarks if you should get in, as 'll be easy 'eard in that small place, for they'll 'ave you out like a knife in no time, besides a sendin' you to prison for contempt."

I says, "Mr. Brown, you may trust your good lady for manners all over the world, as never

forgot myself, not even afore the Pope 'isself, and would speak up for the truth afore the Grand Turk."

He says, "If you gets in, as I much doubts, you keep your 'ead shet, that's all you've got to do."

I says, "I am quite awares as it is my place for to see and 'ear and say nothink, as my dear mother brought me up to when quite a child, as was always noted for a-keepin' of my tongue between my teeth, not but wot that's a dangerous 'abit, for in course if anyone were to take and chuck you under the chin, why, where would your tongue be, I should like to know."

Says Brown, "If no 'arm don't 'appen to your tongue till some one takes to chuckin' you under the chin, old gal, it's my opinion as you'll carry it safe to your grave."

The fust thing Monday mornin' I got a note from Mrs. Bewlay, a-sayin' as they'd got a chance of gettin' into court that werry next day, and a-beggin' of me to come over to 'er dorter's, and 'ave a bit of dinner quite early, as they wasn't a goin' to be got in till the afternoon.

So off I set betimes, and got over to close agin the Wictoria Station, as is where Mrs. Rowlins lives, and found both mother and dorter, as was pleased to see me, not as she looked well, and as to the infant, it were a poor, peeky-lookin' little thing,

and four others, as was by the first wife, thro' 'er 'avin' married a widderer.

I were arf sorry as I'd been and got there that early, as were only jest half-past ten o'clock, cos I'd took my dinner with a picter of a leg of pork in my basket, as didn't weigh four pounds, with flesh like cream, thro' a-knowin' as neither on 'em weren't overflush, as the sayin' is.

So I says, "I've come to spend the day, leastways 'ave took the liberty for to bring my dinner, as it were a love of a pig as our milkman killed the night afore last, and let me have 'is leg as a favour."

Says Mrs. Rowlins "We'll send it to the oven."

I says, "Escuse me, mum, but it would be a downright sin for to sodden that lovely cracklin' as won't take over an 'our to roast."

"Well," says Mrs. Bewlay, "that'll do; for we're a-goin' to dine at twelve sharp, as is only a bit of cold meat, and am glad as you've come in good time, as were a-goin' to get into court quite early this arternoon—me and Kesiah; and that's why I rote thro' thinkin' as we can get you in no doubt, thro' knowin' of a husher, but mustn't be later than a quarter to two, as will get us good places."

"Well," I says, "then pre'aps we'd better put off the pork till supper."

They both says, "As you please;" but when I

come to see the cold meat, as were a shoulder of mutton, werry red and damp at the bone as it were cut down to, I thought as I'd rather fall back on my own leg, so me and Mrs. Bewlay set to work for to stuff it, while Mrs. Rowlins made up the fire, and down we 'ad it before eleven o'clock, as I knowed would be done to a turn by ten minnits to twelve.

I 'ad to watch it all the time, for the only jack as she 'ad to roast it by were one made of a bit of woosted to dangle, as wouldn't keep on turnin' without constant twists.

If I'd knowed things was as they was, I'd as lief 'ave took my pork to a thieves kitchen as cook it there, for of all the muddles as ever I see it were that room, with Mrs. Bewlay a-washin' the baby at that time of day, and the others a-fightin' for the powder-puff and things, with the baby a-shriekin' like ten thousand murders, and Mrs. Rowlins, as were a-dressin' in the back room, a-comin' out in a 'uff, as upset 'er mother, a-sayin' as she were sure it must be a pin, as I certingly should 'ave said myself 'cos in course Mrs. Bewlay couldn't be espected to 'ave no esperience with children thro' Mrs. Rowlins bein' 'er only one, as were brought up by 'and, with a seeton in the nape of 'er neck, as is all awry to this day.

The rooms was in sich a muck that it give me quite a turn, but I set to and 'elped tidy it up and

quieted them children with a pennorth of sweets, and promisin' to make 'em a apple dumplin', tho' I only brought the apples for the sauce, but there was enuf to make four good sized dumplin's, as we sent to the baker's.

I'd known Mrs. Bewlay a-many years before ever bein' Mrs. Jarvis, tho' 'adn't met for over seven years, thro' a disagreement as we 'ad over a raffle for a white lace wail of mine when she fust married, as she took three tickets for at a shillin' each, and then lost 'er temper thro' not a-winnin' of it, as I were none the better off for myself, and only got up the raffle to 'elp poor Mrs. Prentis, as were a-goin' to emigrate without a shillin' to bless 'erself with, as the sayin' is, and goin' out in the steerage, with seven and the baby only three weeks old, and not a-wantin' the wail got up the raffle for 'er, as 'ad lived oppersite me over three years, with Mrs. Bewlay, as were then Mrs. Jarvis, for a next-door neighbour, so didn't meet Mrs. Bewlay no more not for years, nor yet think on 'er till we met permiscous one day in a bus, and thro' not a-wishin' to bear no mallis, 'eld out my 'and, as she took to 'elp 'erself in with, and arter a few words, asked my pardon on the spot for 'er 'asty word as 'ad parted us over that wail.

"Not," she says, "as ever I wanted it myself, but couldn't abear as that flauntin' fish-fag, Mrs.

Corsby, should win it, as weren't never 'ardly out of a public 'ouse."

I says, "Let bygones be bygones," I says, "for," I says, "she come to a untimely endin', as the sayin' is, for I see 'er with my own eyes a-turnin' of a mangle in a front kitchen, close agin Wellclose Square, as is a drop for any one as 'ave rode in their own shay, with three flounces to your gownd, as reg'lar as clock work every Sunday arternoon, while the weather lasted fine, and never thought of a rainy day, as overtook 'er thro' 'im a puttin' of 'is 'and to a bill, as led 'im to ruin, tho', in my opinion, much too fond of 'orse racin' as is a thing as runs away with you if give in to.

"For I'm sure I've seen parties as 'ave gone out as sober as judges to that there race as they calls the Darby-day come 'ome a disgrace to their sect, and more than one 'as never come 'ome at all; for there was Jane Benfield, as run away with young Chalker, the milkman, as always swore as they went to church that werry mornin' afore goin' to the races, tho' I must say as I 'as my doubts, but she certingly were married at that church near the Waterloo Station, for I've see 'er lines, poor thing, when he'd gone off to 'Merryker, and left 'er in the lurch with two, not as I could say as it were the Darby-day, thro' the clergyman as married 'em bein' that careless as he never put it in the register

as he did ought to, and would 'ave settled the question, but that's the wust of them clergy, they werry often don't take no notice of them days as they did ought, thro' bein' reg'lar hollidays all the world over."

So in course me and Mrs. Bewlay was good friends agin, and that's 'ow it were we got fust a-talkin' over the Tichbung case, as come 'ome to 'er, she said, thro' it a-bein' jest like 'er own father, as deserted 'er mother, and thro' never bein' 'eard of over seven 'ears, 'er mother natrally took and married agin, as were knocked out of 'er bed in the middle of the night by 'er fust 'usband a-comin' back, leastways a-swearin' as he were, and a disappearin' agin the next mornin', and never 'eard on no more, as in course broke up 'er 'ome and died of a broken 'art thro' bein' 'appy with 'er second, as in course wouldn't take and live in open bigamy, thro' bein' a respectable man and no family.

He were always kind to Mrs. Bewlay as he took in arter 'er mother's death, and married Jarvis without 'is consent, as she never forgive 'erself for, for the old gentleman died within a year, and left over three thousand pounds, as would every shillin' of it 'ave come to 'er if he 'adn't took and burnt 'is will the werry day as he 'eard of 'er marridge, so two nephews as was sisters sons walked in and took everythink, tho' total strangers, and never see the

old man in their lives, and 'ardly knowed 'is name except on 'is tombstone, thro' bein' 'is 'airs-at-law, as they calls 'em; but no more right to it than the man in the moon, as 'adn't never set eyes on either of 'em.

That leg of pork did eat beautiful, like chicken for tenderness, and done to a turn thro' me a-keepin' of a watchful eye constant on the spit, but I must say as not all the Tichbungs as ever were born or thought on should ever make me 'urry over a meal like that agin, not as I did 'urry myself, but it were a reg'lar interrupted dinner thro' Mrs. Bewlay a-swallerin' a bit of cracklin' the wrong way, as I thought were the knuckle bone in 'er throat, as were as black in the face as your 'at, as the sayin' is; and it's a mussy as I'd done my dinner afore it 'appened, for it reg'lar upset me, as were obligated to send for a quartern of the best cognac, as set us all on our legs afore we started in a cab.

We'd far better 'ave walked, for the joltin' of that cab quite upset Mrs. Bewlay, as turned that faint as we 'ad to stop twice, as nothin' but Jamaica 'ot didn't seem to 'ave no effects on.

When we got to that Court it were jest on two o'clock, and the Judge were still at 'is lunch, as must require a deal of keepin' up, as well as the rest on 'em.

The husher he managed for to smuggle us in

sideways, but said Mrs. Rowlins couldn't take 'er hinfant in, as made 'er turn werry rumbustical, but wouldn't go 'ome, and said as she'd wait about, 'cos the husher says as he were sure we should soon 'ave enuf on it.

The place as were a ban-box for size were pretty well crowded when we got in, and looked like a perlice court, but me and Mrs. Bewlay got up in a place as were werry like a pew in a 'Igh Church, with a desk in front on us; and never in this world were I more squeezed up, and the 'eat reg'lar meltin' like a soap biler's wat.

So I says to Mrs. Bewlay, "It's to be 'oped as this 'ere trial wont last all thro' till the 'ot weather agin, or that there claimint will be melted down in 'is own fat," as the sayin' is.

She says, "I do 'ope I shan't go off, for I feels werry queer."

I says, "Can't you undo your things a little."

She says, "I can't get this 'ere string undone, as 'ave run into a knot thro' tryin'."

I says, "Let me try," and puts my 'and under 'er shawl for to try and get at it, when a feller as set next 'er says, "Leave off with you."

I says, "I shall not thro' my friend a-wishin' me to."

He says, "If you tickles me agin I'll 'ave you

turned out of Court, as did ought to be ashamed of yourself."

I says, "Me tickle you; why, I never touched you."

He says, "You did, or else wot did you put your 'and under my arm for."

Well, just then the Judge come back, and all the lot on 'em, prisoner and all, as I knowed in an hinstant by 'is size as certingly is a fine growed man, and no wonder parties didn't know 'im at once, for he must be growed out of all knowledge, as the sayin' is, and I'm werry sure as I shouldn't know my Joe if he'd got that lusty arter bein' ship-wrecked and livin' like a savidge in them back woods, but, as I says to Mrs. Bewlay, "Wotever he's lived on he's throve on it."

That feller as said as I'd been a-ticklin' on 'im, as set a-glarin' and a-frownin' at me, says, "'Ush," in a werry rude way, a-dictatin' like.

So I says, "You'd better get up on the bench," I says, "and set up for the Judge yourself."

He says, "That's where you did ought to be, 'cos you could give 'im a leg up with your opinion as you're so free with."

Just then, others calls out silence, and them lawyers begun a-talkin' among theirselves through one on 'em a-wantin' a letter to be read from a

butcher somewheres, as the other said did not ought to be.

So, I says, "Wot foolishness not to read wot the butcher's got to say, as might throw lights on the subject."

Says a man next me, "Do you want to be turned out for contempt?"

I says, "There's not a man alive as could do it without a-swearin' false; but that's what they're used to here."

Well, I don't know 'ow long they wasn't a-wranglin' over that butcher's letter, as were a reg'lar boon of contention to the lawyers, and made the judge get out of patience; but them as wouldn't 'ave it read got the day, for fear as the others should know too much.

So I says to Mrs. Bewlay, "Ah!" I says, "they're afraid as it would be over too soon."

"Law!" she says, "the judge would be thankful to 'ave it over."

"Ah!" I says, "no doubt; 'cos he's paid by the year, and not by the job. But," I says, "of course them as gets their money day by day wants to spin it out the same as Mrs. Sculley as came to make up my bed and winder curtains, as 'ad eighteenpence the day and her keep, and was six weeks in the 'ouse; and I don't believe as she'd 'ave done 'em

under a year, if it 'adn't been as she got a order for another job as she were afraid of losin'."

And I know'd a party—leastways Brown did—as were a lawyer, and 'ad a will case as he kep' on over thirty year, for fear as the wrong man should get it, as 'is son took and finished off the werry fust year arter 'is father 'ad retired from the business, and went and told the old gent the werry next Sunday, as took to his bed from that werry day, and never 'eld up 'is 'ead agin, a-sayin' as that will case properly 'andled would 'ave been a good livin' for 'is grandchildren.

So it shows as things did not ought to be finished up in a 'urry, partikler them wills; as in course if you gives the property to the wrong man ain't in no ways disposed for to give it up agin, any more than a dog with a bone in 'is throat as will fight for it to the last.

In course I were a-speakin' in a whisper, under my breath like, but turned that silent as soon as ever that 'Turney-Gin'ral begun a-askin' the prisoner—as in course I means the claimint—a lot of questions as were uncommon 'ot for 'im.

I've a bad mem'ry over some things myself, but I do think if I'd ever been in a shipwreck I should 'ave remembered them as was saved along with me; but wot 'it me 'ardest of all as I've 'eard about, it is not a-goin' to the bank for 'is money, as is a thing

as any fool could do; and wot's more, I've knowed myself them as was lunytics wide awake over their dividends; and I 'ave 'eard say as you can't make out anybody mad as is all square over them; and I'm sure when I've been up at the bank for my bit of money, the objecs as I've seen come for theirn 'ave give me quite a turn, as was more fitter for their beds than a one-horse fly.

Besides, I knowed a party myself as live close agin Chelsea 'Ospittle as were as mad as a 'atter, as the sayin' is, and always slep' in 'er pattens on a pile of books, with a large four-poster and a feather bed in the room; as never wouldn't 'ave 'er clothes made up, but wore 'em all pinned together, as must have been painful, I should say, to set in, et alone a-layin' down in.

Well, she had all 'er 'ouse shet up with over sixty dogs and cats, as was a downright noosance to the naybourood, as her nephews and nieces tried their werry utmost to turn into a state of lunicy, but couldn't, thro' 'er a-receivin' 'er dividends that reg'lar, as she always took in notes and pinned into the busim of 'er dress, and paid 'er way reg'lar; and wot's more, couldn't set 'er will aside, tho' she did leave money to the 'Ome for Dissolute Dogs as passes their lives in the streets, but were sharp enuf to leave 'er lawyer a thousan' pounds, and prowided for 'er ›ctor and 'er agent, as all swore

she were the right-mindedest woman as ever they'd knowed, and in course they was good judges, thro' bein' that interested in the case, as in course anyone would be with that money a-'angin' to it.

Well, jest then the claimint said a somethink as made parties larf, as I didn't exactually catch, so I says to the party as were a-settin' next me, I says, "Escuse me, sir, but wot were that?"

He says, "If you keeps on a-jawin', 'owever can you espect to 'ear?"

I says, "I were only a-makin' of a remark to a friend on the quiet afore the case begun."

"Well, then," he says, "it 'ave begun now in right earnest, so do hold your noise; and," he says, "the next time as you eats onions when a-comin' to a crowded court, bile 'em fust."

I says, "You're a impident low-lived waggerbone," and turns away from 'im, and see as Mrs. Bewlay 'ad dropped off into a 'eavy dose, and kep' a-givin' them short snorts as shows a uneasy sleep arter a 'arty meal of pork as I 'ave knowed end fatal, so I thought as I'd give 'er a gentle nudge with my elber in the side to rouse 'er.

I'm sure I didn't 'ardly touch 'er, but some'ow or other my elber fetched 'er on a tender pint, for she started up with a yell, a-puttin' of 'er 'and to 'er chest, a-sayin' she were shot thro' the 'art.

Well, there was a pretty 'ow-dye-do—a reg'lar

uproar, as made the judge call out as he'd 'ave the court cleared, and up come the hushers for to keep silence, and one on 'em, not 'im as 'ad let us in, and says, "Please, ladies, walk this way, as 'is lordship's orders as you should both be took care on."

I says, "And werry perlite on 'im too," and follers that husher as took us out of court right into the hopen street, and says, "If ever I ketches you in agin, I'll get you committed."

Says Mrs. Bewlay, a-turnin' on me like a worm, "Yes, it's all your fault, as 'ave be'aved disgraceful and been the ruin of my friend, the husher, as 'll lose 'is place."

In course I did not want no words, not in the hopen street, partikler as Mrs. Rowlins comes up decided inebriated, with 'er 'air all over 'er face, and the baby 'arf out of 'er arms.

There was a good many standin' about, and I were that ashamed, for parties got a-larfin' and a-sayin' as I were the fieldmale complainint.

Mrs. Rowlins wouldn't get in a cab, and I were that afraid as she'd drop the hinfant, so says to 'er, "Let me 'old the babby," and so she did, and while 'er and 'er mother was a-wranglin' over goin' into a public-'ouse, as I'm werry sure no respectable 'ouse would 'ave served 'er with another drop, I whisked into a bus as were a-passin', and got back

to their place, a-meanin' to get my basket and leave the hinfant with the woman of the 'ouse, as seemed a decent body like.

When I got in at the door I 'eard a-singin', and when I opened their room door that wretched Bewlay were a-sittin' at the table a-singin' and a-ollerin' as had been and picked the bone of that leg of pork, and says, "Hallo, old Mother Brown, 'ere you are, jest in time to send for some more rum, and we'll 'ave a jug of punch to drink success to the Republic."

I says, "I wouldn't send for a drop not if it was to choke you;" it's lucky as I'd give the babby to the woman, for the willin got up and come a-rushin' to me, and says, "Give us a bus, old gal."

I ketched up the poker with one 'and and my basket with the other, and says, "Stand off," and keeps on a-backin' to the door.

The nasty drunken wretch stops short, and says, "Don't be unkind to me, love me like a mother."

So I puts down the poker, and was a-rushin' out of the room, with 'im a 'ollerin', "You've promised to love me," when who should be at the door but Mrs. Bewlay, as flew like ten thousand tiger cats, a-sayin', "Oh! you base, double-faced old faggit."

That dorter of hern were a-follerin' and 'ollers out, "Oh! you wile kidnapper, where is my precious babby?" I didn't say nothink to neither,

bet give 'em both a shove, as sent Mrs. Rowlins back'ards, a-settin' on to the stairs as led to the second floor with 'er mother in 'er lap, as was both considerable cut.

Downstairs I rushes, and got into the first bus as I could, and did 'ardly know where I was till I got to Temple Bar, as I'm thankful as they ain't been and pulled it down, or I shouldn't never 'ave knowed as I were at it.

So knowin' were I were, I got out of that bus as were a-goin' up Chancery Lane, and got another as took me close 'ome, and found Brown ready for 'is tea; as I were a-famishin' for myself.

My 'ead were that confused, as I couldn't say a word about wot I'd see till my third cup, as seemed to 'ave cleared my brains, and then I begun a-tellin' Brown wot they'd all said.

"Well," he says, "it's no use you're a-tellin' me wot the claimint said, cos he weren't there, as I see by the evening paper."

"Well," I says, "in course the papers knows best; but I were showed 'im twice, and thinks my word's to be took afore a penny paper; but," I says, "never mind, I'm there the fust thing in the mornin', for I means to complain to the judges of that there husher."

Brown says, "All right," and soon arter tea goes out, a-sayin' as he'd be in to supper, as he'd

brought 'ome some black puddin's for; and werry nice they turned out, with a bit of toasted cheese to foller, with a glass of old ale to top up, as the sayin' is.

I don't know when I've enjoyed my supper more, thro' a-dinin' that early, as I considers twelve o'clock, and went to bed that sleepy; but, I says to Brown, "If I should be estra 'eavy in the mornin', rouse me up," I says, "for I'll be at that court a little arter nine, and am pretty sure as that husher will be obligated to let me in."

Some'ow or other I was dreadful bothered to get a bus that next mornin', and kep' a-gettin' into wrong ones, and then were too late for the court, tho' they let me in easy enuf, and I looks round, and there were not the same judge, nor yet all the same parties, and there were Mrs. Bewlay a bein' blowed up for her behaviour, as said it were all my fault, and so did 'er dorter.

So I says, "Drunk or sober," I says, "she don't know arf as much about it as me, as 'ave knowed the claimint ever so long."

Says Mrs. Bewlay, a-turnin' on me, "You're a falsehood; you knows nothink about 'im but wot I told you."

I says, "Mum, don't address me, as won't stoop to notice you."

Says the judge, "Wotever is this row in court?"

Well, jest then I felt a 'eavy 'and on my shoulder, as shook me, and I turns and sees the claimint close agin me, as seemed for to wish to speak to me on the quiet, as follored 'im into a private room, and says to me, "You knows me?" I says, "In course, and wants to be your friend, if so be as you're the rightful hair; but," I says, "wotever you do, don't go to deceive me, for," I I says, "it seems to me as you don't speak out," I says; "and as to bein' lost at sea," I says, "I were once in a gale myself, and might 'ave been wrecked; but, law bless you! if I come back in forty year every one would know me."

He says, "Set down and take it cool, mother."

I says, "There you goes agin; now, do stow them larks, as ain't evidence, but," I says, "if you are bothered with that there 'Turney-Gin'ral, why not speak to the judge on the quiet?"

He says, "I'm a chickaleery cove, with my one, two, three."

I says, "That ain't langwidge for a barrernite; but," I says, "if you will go on so, I'll speak to the judge myself for you."

He says, "A quartern and two outs."

I says, "Not a drop till you 'ave told me the truth."

I didn't seem to turn my 'ead, but there was the judge a-glarin' at me like red-'ot coals.

I says, "My Lord, I do believe as he's innercent; and do spare 'im for 'is mother's sake."

Then there seemed a reg'lar row in the place, and some one give me another shake, and I see Mrs. Jarvis and 'er dorter close by me.

So I says, "Stand back," I says, "for," I says, "a woman in liquor is a sight I never could a-bear."

Then Mrs. Rowlins, she flew at me a-screamin' out, and then 'er mother took and shook me wiolent, and says, "You're a-snorin' frightful."

I says, "I 'ave not closed my eyes, as am too wide awake for that."

She bust out a-larfin' close in my ear, as made me turn away.

"Wotever is that row?" says the Judge.

If that impident blackguard next me as accused me of liquor didn't say, "Please, my Lord, it's only two old ladies as is a little on, and one on 'em did ought to be serpeneed, for she knows all about the case, and could soon settle it."

I says that I could.

Says the Judge, "Stand down, then, and come in front."

It give me sich a turn.

So I says, "No, my Lud," I says, for that were the way as them lawyers called 'im, which I thought fust was their impidence, 'cos some on 'em

made uncommon free with 'im; not but wot he give 'em quite as good as they brought, tho' he did try to butter 'em over with a carneyin' way, a-sayin', "Brother Walentine, I didn't go to do it," when that there brother Walentine took 'im up werry sharp.

So says the Judge, a-lookin' werry fierce, "Where's that witness as I 'ears knows all about it?"

I says, "'Ere I am, my Lud, as certainly did ought to know a somethink, thro' avin' read every line."

"Ah!" says the Claimint, a-lookin' at me, "I knows 'er werry well, a old sweet'art of mine long afore I went to Horsetrailier."

I says, "Me, you waggerbone! 'Ow dare you say sich a thing! Why, if my 'usban' were 'ere he'd take and break every bone in your skin, tho' it would be 'ard work to get at 'em."

"Silence," says the Judge at 'im,

"Attend to me," says that there 'Turney-Gin'ral."

"Well," I says, "so I am."

Then he says, "Would you be surprised to 'ear that you were engaged to be married to the said Sir Roger Tichbung?"

"Law," I says; "never."

Says the Judge, "'Old your tongue."

The 'Turney-Gin'ral, "My Lud, if you will keep a-puttin' of your oar in, 'owever am I to cross-examine the witness."

Says the Judge, "My learned brother, I sets corrected."

I says, "That's somethink like a Judge, as knows 'is place."

Says the Claimint, a-winkin' at me, "Hallo, Martha, 'ow's the old man?"

I says, "I didn't come 'ere to be insulted; and as to that feller a-sayin' as he knows me, it's a black 'arted false'ood."

Says the 'Turney-Gin'ral, a-glarin' at me, "Would you be surprised to 'ear as you was actually married to this man, and as your own son is the livin' himage on 'im."

I says, "My Joe grow'd that porpus, never."

Says the Judge, "You are evadin' the questions and doin' your case 'arm."

Up jumps another of 'em lawyers, and says, "I can't stand it, and wont, if you're a-goin' to be Judge and Counsel too."

Says the Judge, "I'm werry sorry, and withdraws the obserwation."

I says, "I tell you wot, if I'm a-goin' to be kep' a-standin' 'ere till you've done a-squabblin' I shall 'ave my legs fly the same as Mrs. Challens, as was brought on by fourteen' ours at the wash tub."

Says one of 'em lawyers, "You'll 'ave to stand 'ere for many a year to come."

"Wot," I says, "and no rest nor yet refreshments."

Says the Judge, "Will nothink keep that old woman to the point?"

"Yes," I says, "a chair would."

Then says the Judge, "Give 'er one."

Says some one, "There ain't a seat to be 'ad for love or money."

Then says the Judge, "Let 'er come and set by me."

'Owever they got me up there I can't think, but there I was a-settin' like Queen Wictoria 'erself a-goin' to opin Parlymint, all but the crown and speckter.

The Judge he turns on me quite sharp, and says, "Who are you?"

I says, "A lady, as am the lawful wife of——"

"Yes," says the Judge, "we knows, married surreptitious to the late barrernite, and you're prepared to swear as this is your son."

I says, "Certingly, my son is my son as went away over nine year ago, but 'ave seen 'im myself since, thro' a-goin' over there, as is Canader."

"Silence," some one says.

I says, "'Ow can I answer questions and keep silence at the same time, as is talkin' foolish."

Says the Claimint, "Do you mean to say as you don't remember me afore ever I went over there."

I says, "I knows werry well as you've been over in Horsetrailier, and was shipwrecked, and saved and took to wanderin' about, and didn't care to 'ave no money, so left it at the bank, and then forgot all about 'ow to read and rite, and couldn't speak no French, as certingly I am not surprised at, for I can't say much myself tho' I've been over there once or twice."

"Over where," says the Judge.

"That ain't a fair question," says one of 'em lawyers; "and if you will keep on chimin' in, my Lud, the Jury will 'ave to commit you."

"Now," says the lawyer, a-turnin' on me, "did you or did you not take the Claimint from the month, and ain't he jest the sort of man as you've known plenty of hinfants grow into."

"Well," I says, "if you puts it like that, I must say as I 'ave knowed many a child as you'd never 'ave thought could 'ave struggled thro' 'is teeth, grow quite as tall tho' not so much in flesh."

Says the lawyer, "Did ever you know a child as weren't born straight-legged, grow into knock-knees?"

"Why," I says, "certingly I've knowed 'em bandy thro' bein' put down too soon, and taken

clean off their legs ag'in by their teeth; but," I says, "if this 'ere Claimint weren't knock-kneed when he went abroad with all his teeth cut, I don't believe as all the Horsetrailiers in the world would bring knock-knees on, no more than any one as 'ave got 'em can take 'em off, tho' a many 'ave tried, the same as that tailor, as I well remembers 'earin' on, as took an' scraped 'is shin bones with glass, so as to get 'em thin enuf to bend 'em straight."

Says another lawyer, "Do you mean to say that your name is not Baigint, and that you 'aven't knowed the Claimint intimate?"

I says, "Wotever are you a-talkin' about; why," I says, "ain't I told you who I am."

"Well," says he, "then you was aboard of the 'Beller,' as floundered at sea, and every 'and aboard perished."

"Yes," I says, "I remembers that."

"Will you swear that," says the Judge.

"Do 'old your jaw, my Lud," says the lawyer; "there ain't no gettin' a word in hedgeways for you."

"Well," says the Judge, "I'm sorry I spoke, but it's 'ard work a-settin' 'ere month arter month mumchance, a-makin' notes and not allowed to open my lips."

Says the Claimint to me, "Don't you remember me escapin' aboard of the 'Osprey'?"

I says, "In course I do; I read it in the paper."

"Well, then," says he, "wot will you take to drink."

I says, "No sperrits."

Says the Judge, "Glasses round."

Up gets one of the Jury and says, "It can't be allowed if we're not to 'ave no refreshments, nor yet go 'ome till mornin' without we gives our werdix; we ain't a-goin' to set 'ere and to see you a-guzzlin'."

I says, "You can't be no gentleman to talk like that, and I considers it mean spite in you, 'cos you're obligated to set there till the day of judgment, for to prevent others a-'avin' their nutriment."

Says the lawyer to me, "You'll be conwicted for perjury in a minnit."

I says, "Wot for?"

"Why," says the Judge, "'cos you smells of rum and onions till I can't 'ardly bear myself."

I says, "I've got a peppermint-drop in my reddycule as 'll sweeten the hair, only I can't get at it."

Says the lawyer, as were the himage of Brown, "'Ow come you to practise as a butcher over there, when you might 'ave got your livin' respectable with all that money in the bank?"

I says, "Me a butcher? why, I ain't no 'and at

carvin', and couldn't cut up a live beast not to save my life."

"'Ow come you to take the name of Ortin?" says the Judge, a-glarin' at me.

I says, "If you looks like that at me, I never can ans'er not even a civil question, let alone sich a badgerin' as this." I says, "Me take the name of Ortin? why, it's a name as I never 'eard in my life."

Says the Claimint, a-shakin' of 'is fat fist at me, "Take care, old gal; 'ow about that there knuckle of weal close agin Aldgate Church."

I says, "That were not the man as I can't remember the name on now, but remembers the circumstance well, as were quite tainted when I got it 'ome, as were as only as far as the Commercial Road, and always suspected that were the party as give me that duffin' florin as got me into trouble at the public where I 'ad a glass of mild ale thro' the weather bein' warm and carryin' that 'eavy basket, as the weal weighed over three pounds, as is a weight you feels with your basket full of other things besides the jinte, as bears down the arm, partikler with roomattics in the other shoulder."

Says the Judge, "Keep your jintes out of the way, and tell us how it were as you went off to Horsetrailier with the Claimint; was it with your 'usban's consent?"

I say, "Bless your 'art, wotever are you a-sayin', a-takin' away a lone woman's character in open court?"

Says the other lawyer, as was changed from the 'Turney-Gin'ral into somebody else, "I do say as it's downright disgraceful for the bench to go on so."

Says the Judge, "Do them remarks apply to me."

"Well, if the cap fits, wear it," says the other lawyer, "for never did I see sich goin's on."

"Well," says the Judge, "I shan't sit 'ere much longer, for I've jest 'ad a message as they're a-goin' to promote me suddin over all your 'eads, 'cos they wants me to go and try somebody else as they wants found guilty, and all the other judges 'as refused, and the jury won't conwict thro' 'im bein' a clergyman of the 'Stablished Church, and not likely as he decoyed 'er down a lane with a pewter whistle to murder 'er of a Sunday evening arter she'd left 'is service."

Says the Claimint, "I've been e're since last spring, and am dead beat."

"Then," says the jury, "you'd better plead guilty, and go back to Horsetrailier, for we're all pretty nigh ruined, and one or two of us will 'ave to go through the court, and several must die in the course of natur', if you goes on like this year arter year."

I says, "Bless me, you don't mean to say as we've been 'ere for years and Brown a-waitin' for me, as won't touch 'is supper till I comes in; and tho' no doubt the gal will 'ave the sense to put the tripe back and keep the baked taters 'ot, yet it's a dreadful thing to think of goin' without your meals for years, and not bein' allowed to sleep in your own bed week arter week, and all along of a family dispute, as I don't see as the public's got anythink to do with it."

Says the Claimint, a-glarin' at me, "It's all thro' your fault and falsehoods, you wile, wicked, old woman, 'cos if you was to speak the truth it might be settled in a minnit, for you've been through it from the werry beginnin'."

I says, "I don't deny it, but," I says, "'owever am I to swear as you wasn't changed at nuss afore ever I 'eard on you; besides," I says, "for a man of your size to ask your tailor whether you ain't the identical party as he made clothes for when not ten inches round, is downright perjury; besides," I says, "whyever didn't your ma, tho' haged, up and speak the moment as she fust see you, as could no doubt 'ave indemnified you, the same as Mrs. Bethel did 'er son, when she see 'im without 'is wig, as 'ad lost 'is 'air in the yaller fever over in Barbadoes, thro' a blow on 'is 'ead with a marlin spike, as left a scar when he pitched out of the two pair back,

a-larkin' with 'is brother, as fractured 'is skull, and was reg'lar trepanned, and went to sea thro' the press-gang as did used to be about in the time of the war, as broke out when Bonypart were sent to Roosher."

Says the Claimint, "I've got marks about me, only I can't get nobody to swear to 'em."

Says the Judge, "It's my opinion you an' this old woman 'ave been a-trumpin' up a story between you."

I says, "That's cool, considerin' as I never see 'im afore in my life, and don't know 'im from Adam."

"Then wot brings you 'ere?" says the Judge.

"Why," I says, "you did, arter the omblebus 'ad set me down."

"Husher," says the Judge, "remove 'er and keep 'er in the cells till the risin' of the Court, as will cool 'er courage."

I says, "Wot, as may be for years and may be for ever, with roomattics that bad as feels perished."

But it wasn't no use my talkin', for I was a-goin' to be bundled down off the bench, neck and crop, with a crash, but wouldn't go out afore I'd told 'em a bit of my mind, so I 'olds on to the bench, and I says, "If you had any sense in your 'eads, you'd soon settle this, 'cos in course this is the man or he ain't. Well, if he is the man, why, give 'im 'is rights, tho', in course, I should be sorry for the little boy and 'is ma to be turned out of 'ouse and 'ome, as is an orfin for all that, and 'er

a nice young lady, I've 'eard say, tho' a widder, as comes of settlin' so young; and tho' I 'ave' eard say as some of the fam'ly was a rantipole lot, yet, in course, there's a black sheep in ev'ry flock, and a lost sheep too, and if this one is both black and lost too, it's werry easy to prove as he's somebody else, for, in course, he must 'ave 'ad a father and mother, the same as the rest on us, as must 'ave lived somewheres, even if not Wappin', as he went to that Sunday arternoon as soon as he got back, as is to 'is credit, in my 'pinion, and shows as he weren't ashamed of 'is poor old parents, tho' he were a-goin' to set up for a gentleman and a barrernite in 'is own rights, so didn't ought to be put down for 'avin' of his feelin's with his 'art in the right place, as the sayin' is.

"Not as that proves 'im to be Ortin, nor yet a butcher over in Horsetrailier, not but wot there's a many as is drove to do a many things in them wild parts, as they never dreamt on here, the same as a lady as I 'eard on, as 'ad to hemigrate thro' 'er 'usban' a makin' too free with the till in the ready-made boot and shoe line, and were reduced to stickin' 'er own pigs; and I knowed a minister myself as went out to Californier, and picked up a pretty penny a-standin' at the wash-tub, and there 'ave been bishops drove to the tripe and trotter line, no doubt, as in course their black satin and lawn eeves wasn't no use in the back-woods, for I've

'eard say finery's no good out there, any more than poor Mrs. Hornbell, as went to the gold-diggin's with three ball-dresses and a grand pianer, a-thinkin' she was a-goin' to be a swell, and 'ad to turn 'er 'and to brick-makin', and come over with 'ardly nothink but wot she stood upright in, yet never tried to pass 'erself off as Lady Maress, nor nothink, a-knowin' well as she'd soon be hindentified, as Old Rawlins, the pawnbroker's dorter, altho' they did live at Brixton Rise, and keep the business dark down in Wappin', as I knowed the shop well."

Then, says the Judge, "You knows Ortin."

I says, "It's false."

"Turn 'er out this hinstant," says he, "for darin' to insult the Court," and out they was a-sendin' me, for I felt a-slidin' rapid down.

I give such a 'oller.

"Wot the devil's the matter with you now?" says the Judge.

I says, "'Elp me up, my Lud, for I've been and pretty nigh slipped off the bench."

He busts out a-larfin', and says, "I can't, you're that 'eavy."

So I ketches 'old of 'is wig as he were a-stoopin' over me, as come off in my 'and, and away I went, a-pullin' all the place with me, for all the world like a earthquake, or a shipwreck, or any of them con-wulsions of nature as comes on you unawares.

I felt myself a-goin' and a-goin', as were a 'orrid sensation, and there were that Judge a-chucklin' and a-larfin' at me till I could 'ave tore 'is eyes out, 'as 'ad got 'is wig clutched tight in my 'and.

I says, "Why ever don't you 'elp me, as am a-perishin'."

He give a larf, and says, "Why, you've been and tumbled out of bed; let me get a light."

I says, "Never; you don't mean to say as I've been in bed. Help!"

Well jest then a fusee were struck, and there I was a-settin' on the floor by my own bedside.

I says, "Get out of the room, do."

"Wot for," says Brown, a-comin' round for to 'elp me up.

I says, "Law, Brown, is that you, why, I thought you was the Tichbung Case, and took you for the Judge, and you don't mean to say as I ain't been in Court settin' alongside of the Judge, and not 'ad a chat with Claimint, as took me for 'is ma, nor yet talked to 'im like a friend."

"No," says Brown, "you've been a-dreamin' and a-snortin', and I've took and turned you round and shook you once or twice when you would talk that wild and 'oller out, and at last flies at me and claws off my nightcap."

I says, "Bless my 'art, why, I must be a-goin'

to 'ave a illness, or somethink, for I can't believe, not even now, as I ain't been with them all."

Says Brown, "You've been a-maggin' and a-mutterin', and a-throwin of your arms about."

"Well," I says, "I can't make it out, for it were quite as nat'ral as life, I declare."

"Well," says Brown, "never mind, don't be a-settin' on the floor no longer; up with you, old lady," and he puts me into bed agin like as if I'd been a hinfant.

I says, "You don't mean to say serous as it's all been a dream, Brown; for I could 'ave swore as I'd been all thro' it, and can't believe as it weren't true even now."

Says Brown, "You ain't 'arf awake even yet, and 'adn't better rouse yourself, but go off quiet, for you've been frightful restless."

"Well," I says, "if you're sure as it's dreams, I can't say nothink, but could 'ave took my oath as I'd been in court."

"Ah!" he says, "you mustn't 'ave no more black puddin's and old ale for supper, with a drop of 'ot to top up with."

"Well," I says, "it wasn't arf a 'tumbler."

He says, "I don't say it were too much, but," he says, "you will get so escited over that there Tichbung Case as it'll take and throw you into a fever, as is werry much about."

"Well," I says, "thank goodness, it's settled now."

He says, "You're a-dreamin' ag'in; don't talk, but go to sleep," and so I did, and sound, too; but even in the mornin' I couldn't 'ardly believe as I 'adn't been a-judgin' of that matter, as in course do require a cool 'ead over it.

Brown says to me as I ain't to have no more read to me till it's over, cos he's afraid it'll end in me a-goin' into court and a-sayin' as I'm the real barrernite, or pre'aps a-settin' up to be King of France, not as I should care to be that; for tho' pre'aps my 'ead ain't of much good to me, I shouldn't care to 'ave it gullonteened off my shoulders, as would serve me right if I was to be ketched out to be a impostor like any one else; and all as I've got to say over this ere Tichbung Case is, as in my opinion, they never won't settle it unless they tosses up which is to 'ave it, as in course is not a thing as a lady could stoop to, nor yet let 'er little boy neither, as would be a bad esample for 'im, and give 'im a taste for gamblin' as them street boys is that fond on, and did ought to be stopped; but, law, I don't know neither, for it's wot parties is all up to all over the world, tho' they calls it another name, for wotever is trade but jest the same, and some a deal wuss than the street boys, 'cos many goes into busyness without a penny to bless their-

selves with, and them boys can't go a-playin' at pitch and toss if they ain't got no coppers.

But in course if this ere stout party is the right Claimint, he did ought to 'ave 'is rights, tho' I must say as he've took a werry rum way of gettin' on it.

But wot I thinks is so kind-'arted, is them lawyers' conducts, as is a-fightin' the battle for 'im, as that they lets 'im 'ave money to live like a fightin' cock, with a broom to ride about in, and a-goin' to theayters and amusin' of 'isself with a werry nice family, I'm told, and a faithful servant as in course must know if he's the right man, thro' bein' with 'im so long, and shipwrecked and all that together.

Cos it ain't likely as he'd go and live with 'im without bein' sure as he were the rightful hair.

But I will say as he's a good one to keep a secret, never a-tellin' of that there friend of is'n, Mr. Baigint, about 'is bein' shipwrecked, and I don't suppose as Mr. Baigint cares much about 'im, and only comes for'ard now to see as justice is done by 'im, if possible; cos in course Mr. Baigint won't get nothink by it, any more than the Judge and Jury, as I considers a pound a day money out of pocket to any one as 'ave to give up a good busyness, and am thankful as a jury of matterns wasn't called, with me among them, for I shouldn't

'ave cared to be panelled up in that box for month arter month on them terms, as couldn't bear the confinement, tho' I can't give it up but must go down ag'in into Westminster, as can't a-bear this suspense.

So I told Brown, as says to me, "Why, any one would think as you was the barrernite's mother."

"No," I says, "I am not, nor yet 'is aunt by 'is mother's side; but," I says, "I do feel as somethink did ought to be done."

"Well," he says, "you wiseacres must settle it among you; but," he says, "I 'ope you won't go a-mixin' of yourself up with Mrs. Jarvis no more."

I says, "Trust me for that; no, no," I says, "she were bad enuf as Mrs. Jarvis, but now as she's Mrs. Bewlay, none of your Radical ways for me, as I'm always one to stick up for Queen Wictoria, and," I says "I do 'ope as this ere cold as the Prince of Wales 'ave caught ain't nothink; 'cos," I says, "'is grandpa died of wet feet, thro' not a-changin' of 'is shoes when fust he come in, but stopped a-playin' with the babby, as is now Queen Wictoria; but in course no fault of 'ern; and as to Prince Halbert, why, we didn't hardly know as he were ill, when the great bell of St. Paul's begun a-tollin' for 'im."

I didn't think no more about the Prince bein' out of sorts for a day or two, when Brown come

'ome and says, "Here's nice work with the Prince of Wales."

I says, "Mussy on us, wot is it? Why, surely they 'aven't been and smothered 'im in the Tower, nor nothink like that, or die in the smallpox like Prince Le Boo?"

"No," says Brown, "no; but he's down with a fever, as he's been and caught from a drain."

I says, "Wotever could he been a-doin' down a drain, as ain't the place for the blood royal."

"Oh!" he says, "he slep' over one at Lord Londesbarrers."

"What!" I says, "for a lark or a wager? Dear, dear!" I says, "that boy will break 'is royal ma's 'art, if he will go on with them constant sprees."

Says Brown, "Don't you go a-gettin' 'old of the wrong end of the stick," he says; "the drains was bad unbeknown to every one."

"Then, no doubt the whole lot, thro' 'eavy colds, must 'ave lost their smells, as my dear father always did, and I've knowed parties as were give to too much snuff as couldn't smell nothink, and that's 'ow Mrs. Maltby come to lose 'er place as cook to the Lord Mare, thro' a-sendin' up tainted sassengers as she couldn't smell."

"But," I says, "whyever didn't they 'ave them drains looked to?"

Says Brown, "That's jest wot they did, and were the cause of all the mischief."

"Ah!" I says, "like a lady's school as I've 'eard tell on, as took and opened a old cesspool as they took for a well, arter fifty years, and give 'em all a fever, as were obligated all to 'ave their 'eads shaved and go to the sea-side, as shows as you should always let well alone, as the sayin' is, for the school never got over it, tho' the 'ouse were fumigated, and ruined the schoolmissus, as 'ad to be white-washed 'erself, poor thing, and come to 'arms-houses afore she died."

It give me a orful turn when I 'eard about the Prince bein' that bad, and 'is royal ma a-goin' to see 'im, and that dear Princess a-settin' and a-watchin' 'im, as wanted rest 'erself, poor dear! and when Brown came 'ome and said there was no 'opes, I couldn't 'elp a-sheddin' tears, for I felt like a mother to that young man, as always were that graciously pleased to see me, I'm sure, and looked so, and pinted me out to the Princess settin' by 'is royal side in the carridge over abroad there, as knowed 'im in a instant since fust time as ever I see 'im over in Egyp', as bowed that gracious thro' me a-bendin', as in duty bound, under that Perramid thro' a-rememberin' me on the Nile.

Yet I couldn't 'elp a-'opin', as I thought as all them doctors would never surely let 'im die,

tho' sometimes the best will let 'em slip thro' their fingers, not thro' no fault, but bein' took by surprise. Yet nobody didn't ought to be in this world, and werry often presence of mind will do a deal, the same as Jane Linfeld, as were down at death's door, and brought thro' entire by 'er aunt, as were a-'elpin' nuss 'er, and took and give 'er the wrong bottle in the middle of the night, when she asked for somethink to drink, as swallowed arf a tumbler of whiskey and water as the old lady 'ad jest mixed for 'erself, and made the mistake thro' takin' of it cold.

The moment I 'eard as he'd been and asked for beer, I says, "Then he's got 'is senses all right, and it will be either kill or cure with 'im now; and no doubt a-roppin' up of 'im in them 'ot raw sheepskins must 'ave brought the life back into 'im ag'in.

Says Brown, "Wot are you a-talkin' about now?"

I says, "Wot I've been a-talkin' about a long time, as is the Prince of Wales."

He says, "Wot about 'im?"

"Why," I says, "now as he's a-gettin' better, as we've pretty nigh 'eard the last about 'is illness, I 'opes; but no doubt they've tried everythink, as is showed by them sheepskins as, I repeats, saved 'im."

"Wot sheepskins?" says he.

"Why," I says, "them forty sheepskins as they rolled 'im up in, 'ot as they was tore off the

hanimal's back, one arter the other, with five butchers 'ard at constant work to supply 'em 'ot and 'ot, jest the same as 'ot flannins in fermentation for a swelled face, as must be kep' up constant."

Brown says, "Wot more did he 'ave?"

"Why," I says, "lots of things, as the one I do not 'old with were a-gettin' of a fine strong young man to be bled to death for to let 'is blood run into the Prince's wains while unconscious."

Says Brown, "Now I tell you wot it is, Martha, you're a-gettin' a loonytick in your old age, to believe such downright rubbish."

I says, "I ain't a-goin' to argue no sich pints, 'cos in course the doctors knows best; and if the young man didn't mind, it's nobody's busyness, and no doubt there's a many as would lay down their lives for the Prince, as the sayin' is, so why not a pint or two of their blood; not as I believe as the blood royal would mix with that common sort, and it ain't likely as they'd take and bleed any of the Royal Family; as would be lowerin' of the constitution; but," I says, "I shall soon 'ear all about it, thro' a-seein' as he were nussed by Mrs. Jones and her sister Mrs. Thomas, as no doubt will drop in as soon as able to leave 'im in safety to a cup of tea, and talk it over with me."

"Not as I expects 'em till he's quite round

ag'in, for they mustn't think of leavin' 'im yet, as will require a deal of care not to 'ave it settle on 'is chest nor yet 'is limbs, as sudden cold might bring on; the same as young Catling, as ended in dropsy, and all thro' 'is own fault, thro' a-bein' that obstinate over goin' out for a walk with the snow on the ground, as throwed 'im back weeks, and would 'ave died but for bags of 'ot salt to his legs, as drawed the water out.

I'm sure that Prince of Wales put Tichbung and every one else out of everybody's 'ead, as them paper boys a-'ollerin' drove me mad; and 'owever Queen Wictoria could a-bear 'avin' all them newspaper men down there a-ritin' all over the place, 'our arter 'our, I can't think, as must 'ave filled every room in the 'ouse with their scribblin'.

Then them painters must be a-goin' down for to draw 'im in 'is bed with all the family round 'im, as in course wouldn't 'ave been allowed if it 'adn't been the 'Perlice Gazette,' as in course can go everywheres, and a very lovely picter they drawed; not as I should care to 'ave my bed-room, as is private, esposed like that.

I'm sure that time as Brown 'ad the roomattic fever as I never took my clothes off over ten days, and didn't get a night's rest for three weeks, if them newspapers 'ad come a-knockin' at my door

every five minnits to ask arter 'im, it would 'ave drove me mad, tho' well meant, and made me that wild I should have throwed cold water on 'em pretty sharp.

As to this here illness, I don't suppose there ain't been nothink like it since the Princess Charlotte died, as were before I can recollect, tho' I've 'eard my dear mother talk on it scores of times, as would 'ave been Queen, and they do say it were that as made Queen Charlotte so jealous, thro' not a-likin' to see 'er own dorters cut out.

Some says it were thro' neglect, and certingly the doctor as attended 'er took and shot hisself; not as I considers as he were bound to do that, any more than these ere three doctors did ought to 'ave pisoned theirselves if they couldn't 'ave brought the Prince of Wales thro' it, as I'm thankful for to think as they did, and it will be a long time afore ever he goes a-stoppin' with any noble lords ag'in, drains or no drains, as in my opinion didn't ought to 'ave their 'ouses made that 'ot and hairtight, 'cos in course if there's any foul hair gets in, why, in course it can't get out.

Tho' I must say, for my part, I think there's a deal of rubbish talked over them drains; as people is apt for to put everything on, and all the time it's their own faults; 'cos if drains was sich deadly

pison, why, all the poor people as lives in them crowded courts and alleys would 'ave been dead and berried long ago.

I do 'ope as Queen Wictoria won't get a bad cold 'erself, with all 'er settin' up; for I well knows as any one is apt to get a chill when the night turns, for all the fires as they may keep up, and wearin' of a thick shawl over a flannin gownd with your 'ead tied up is best, as it's a good thing as she's a-goin' back to Winsor, as must require rest.

I must say as I think, it were a great risk a givin' of the Prince that beer cold; tho' pre'aps, as he fancied it they dursn't 'ave said no; and I 'ave 'eard my dear mother speak of an old aunt of ern as were a-sinkin' rapid with water on the chest, as asked for a bottle of Scotch hail, and took it off in two tumblers, and fell into a dose, and woke up ag'in quite 'erself, and see a many laid in their graves as was a-nussin' 'er, a-waitin' anxshus for 'er bit of money, as they was all a-grabbin' at, and proved a life annuity arter all, as they said died with 'er, in course, tho' I don't see why in course it should, as she couldn't take it with 'er, as the sayin' is.

But I must say as warm beer is a fine thing with a little sugar and ginger, tho' not sperrits, for any one, but perhaps too much for the sick; 'cos them as is in strong 'ealth as can digest anything.

But all as they've got to do now is to keep that

Prince quiet, and then he'll do werry well, and if them dukes and lords comes a-worretin' 'im to come out along with them, if I was the Princess I should up and say, "Come 'ere as much as you please in moderation, and smoke a friendly pipe with 'im, but we can't come a-stoppin' on wisits with you for fear of your drains, as you don't keep in that order as you did ought to."

I'm sorry as that groom died, poor young man, as were a outrider; so in course the Prince must miss 'im the werry fust airin' as he takes thro' bein' a good master I've 'eard say, a party as I knows well; and says as all 'is servants doats on the werry ground he walks on, and that fond of 'is 'orses and dogs too, for when at the worst he wanted 'em all in the room, as in course would 'ave been werry disturbin' in a sick-room, but they must 'ave come in, 'cos he ordered 'em, and that's why they sent for Queen Wictoria all of a 'urry, as in course is the only one as could say 'im nay like 'er, thro' bein' Queen, as could say to 'im firm but kind, "No, my dear, you cannot 'ave a pack of 'ounds and all your 'orses in 'ere till you're a little better," as no doubt knowed her royal woice, as they do say is that clear as you can 'ear 'er all over the 'ouse, tho' not one in course to call about the place, as is wot I can't a-bear to 'ear.

But as I were a-sayin' every attention were paid that poor groom, as must 'ave been delicate from

the werry fust, not but wot they all 'oped as he'd take and pull thro', bein' that young and a nice young feller, and no doubt give 'em all a turn in dyin'; and it's lucky as the Prince didn't 'ear on it when at the wust, as might have throwed 'im back.

Certingly it's a pleasure for to see a united family, even tho' a royal one, and that they certingly was, and showed their feelin's in a-stoppin' to watch all round 'is bed, tho' too many in the room, tho' in course they left off all their grand ways, and Queen Wictoria wouldn't in course wear 'er crown to set up in, but kep' it on a table 'andy, so as to pop it on in a minnit if anyone come in sudden, so as not to be took at a nonplush, as the sayin' is.

I 'ears as all them Dilkes and Communists is reg'lar wild to think as we all cared so much about the Prince of Wales, as 'ave showed 'em as they may whistle for a Republic, as the sayin' is.

I do 'ope as that dear Princess will take care of 'erself, as is far from strong, I've 'eard say; and did ought to think of 'er little family, as Queen Wictoria must be glad to 'ave took in at Winsor, and 'opes as they young Prince 'Esses 'aven't give the other royal family the 'oopin' corf, as is a bad time of year for it, tho' I always thinks as it's best over, as I'll bring any child thro' with my imbrocation, as I rubs in well atween the shoulders, with a little ippicaccuaner, afore the fire, as relieves the chest

partikler with a full child, as is apt to be took chokey in the night, and black in the face in no time, as is a frightful sight to a Christshun mother, tho' in course comes natural to a nigger, as I 'ave 'eard say never gets thro' the measles in consequence.

All as them doctors 'ave got to do now with the Prince is to get up 'is strength, as in course both Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Thomas will look arter in turn, and not give 'im too many slops, as is only slops arter all, tho' made strong as brandy, but whenever he can eat a bit of solid food let 'im 'ave it, tho' in course not a pork chop, nor yet a rabbit, but tripe by all means, if he can fancy it, tho' I should say onions was a risk myself.

I only wish as I'd 'ad the nussin' on 'im, bless 'is royal 'art, but certingly should not 'ave took the liberty for to offer, as many 'as done, as in course both Queen Wictoria and the Princess would escuse, thro' a-showin' a kind 'art, but in my opinion a weak 'ead.

For it were as much as I could do to stop Mrs Trimley a-puttin' her oar in, as the sayin' is, as were a-goin' to send 'im a lot of medsin, as she said, for both body and soul.

It give me a reg'lar turn to see 'er that Monday mornin' a little arter eight, as she come a-strugglin' into my place that red in the face and quite out of

breath, and altogether a-lookin' as if she'd 'ad a shock as 'ad been and throwed 'er into all of a fluster, with a large basket on 'er arm, and a thick letter done up in a blue antelope with sealin'-wax.

So I says to 'er, "You're off a-marketin' early."

She says, "Bless your 'art, it ain't marketin' as I've got; it's things for the Prince as I've been a-gettin' ready all night, leastways left 'em to cool on a-goin' to bed jest on one, and more than 'arf suspects as the cat 'ave been at the jelly, as I've made of cow 'eel, with no flavourin' but the nat'ral, as in course is stronger than the calf's foot."

I says, "Wotever do you mean?"

"Why," she says, "everybody is a-sendin' somethink for to 'elp 'im, poor dear."

I says, "Mrs. Trimley, mum, 'ave you lost your sense out of your 'ead?" I says, "Why, do you suppose as there ain't everythink there for the hair apparent, tho' they may be put about a-bit, then," I says, "he've got 'is royal ma's kitchin and cook to fall back on, let alone the nobility, as in course would lend a 'elpin' 'and."

"Ah!" she says, "but look at my esperience in illness; why," she says, "when I sometimes lays awake a-thinkin' in the night, and for to distract my thoughts into sleep tries to count the berryin'

as I've been and superintended, I am sure to be off sleep afore I'm 'arf thro' 'em."

"Well," I says, "you certingly 'ave 'ad great esperience," and thinks to myself, you shouldn't nuss the cat for me, unless so far as drownin' the kittens goes, for of all the sleepers and snorers as ever set up in this world she's the soundest and loudest as ever I 'eard; and as to cookin', not if I knowed it, as will never 'ave a extra spoon, nor nothink tidy, and too fond of tastin' with 'er fingers for me, as she don't show the water to enuf in my opinion.

But I didn't say no more, only jest asks 'er wot else beside 'er jelly, as she were a-goin' to send the Prince.

So she says to me, "I says to Trimley last night, over supper, a-talkin' about the Prince, I says, 'I'm 'arf a mind for to send them doctors as is attendin' of 'im my coolin' lotion, and I'm sure them pills, as brought old Mr. Livysuch back from death's door, or the next door to it, when down with the ague as run into jaunders, and I'm sure them freezin' powders as would keep a red-'ot iron cool if applied reg'lar, would be a comfort to 'is poor 'ead, tho' some says as bein' in a constant state of fermentation is the best thing for 'im.'"

I says, "Quiet's the best thing for 'im, and not for parties to be a-interferin' and botherin' them

doctors with their advice, as I considers a great liberty with any one, let alone a prince."

"Oh!" she says, "I shall send 'em; and more than that, I've got some lovely tracks, as the Princess will read to 'im, as is what he'll need in gettin' better."

I says, "What do you mean?"

She says, "Serous readin', as our minister says is wot he wants."

I says, "Your minister knows a deal about 'im, no doubt, but in my opinion 'ad better mind 'is own busyness."

"Oh!" she says, "but it is 'is busyness."

"Yes," I says, "and a werry good one too," as 'ave got a chapel up the West-end way, as Mrs. Trimley goes every Sunday by the bus to set under 'im, and only gets in by a favour, as she's told me often, and did once get me in, as there's a row of seats under the winders for the poor all round the chapel, upstairs and down, as was all filled with parties that well dressed, as I says to Mrs. Trimley, when we come out, must 'ave been carridge folks.

"Oh!" she says, "bless you, yes, and there's plenty, as is well-dressed a-standin' at the doors afore they're open."

No wonder there wasn't no room in the pews, as was all that comfortable to look at, and certingly

I never see a 'ansomer man than that minister, with a 'and like a armond, and a diamond as glistened all over the place, with 'is air a-curlin' lovely all over his for'ed, and Mrs. Trimley says two thousand a-year out of the chapel, let alone money with 'is wife, and presents, partikler game, as they're obligated to throw away." So I only give a toss with my 'ead, and she says to me, "Then you don't adwise me to send the things."

I says, "Well, if you do ask my opinion, I should consider it a great liberty myself; but," I says, "as to your tracks, it's a downright hinsult; why," I says, "you might as well set too a-givin' of the Prince a lecture, as nobody as knows theirselves would think of doin', escept pre'aps his ma, as might say, 'Wales, my dear, now don't go a-runnin' no more risks, and do take care of yourself, and be prudent about where you goes, and wot you does, as 'ave got a good 'ome and a dear wife and nice little family, as you must make 'appy.'"

As no doubt he don't want tellin', but will be careful, for he's had 'is lesson, as he's too good a judge not to remember as long as he lives, for he knows as werry few ever gets thro' one such illness, let alone two, as would kill a ox.

So I says, "Don't you go a-puttin' yourself to that trouble and espence, but let the Prince alone, or if your minister thinks as he wants a-talkin' to,

let 'im go and do it 'isself some day when the Prince is quite well and strong agin, and all I 'opes is as the Prince will 'ave his walkin' boots on, and as he won't see your minister in one of them upstair rooms, cos it ain't safe to be kicked anywheres, especially downstairs."

Well, I see she didn't like it much, but she said as she would think over wot I'd said, and so I suppose she did, for she went away, and I never 'eard if she sent the things or not.

But in course, as I were a-sayin', good nussin', next to good doctors, is arf the battle; and wot I calls a good nuss is one as only does wot the doctors tells 'er, and won't go a-thinkin' for 'erself too much, and yet not leave 'er common senses behind 'er; and I must say as I were all of a fidget for to think 'ow that dear Princess were a-gettin' on; for tho' in course Queen Wictoria 'ave great esperience, yet it would be too much for 'er to be a-settin' up constant, as 'ave been so ill 'erself, and in course wouldn't let the Princess do it, as would be madness; so I must say as my mind 'ave been more easy, now as I've 'eard as Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Thomas is with 'im, as is that esperienced as I'd trust 'em with any one from the month, as is a great thing to 'ave parties in sickness as knows 'ow to give and take, as the sayin' is, and won't let the patients 'ave nothink as is bad for 'em, nor yet 'ave

anythink theirselves out of meal-times, and then in moderation.

As for any one a-sayin' as you can set up and watch without proper nutriment, why, it's downright rubbish; not but wot I 'olds with a good book for to keep you awake, tho' for my own part I never 'as no more light than a floatin' wick, now as rushlight shades 'as gone out, and puts on the coals with my fingers, tho' in course always a old glove kep' for the purpose.

I can make my cup of tea without disturbin' a mouse, thro' never eatin' nothink in the night, as might make any one 'eavy, the same as Mrs. Portlock, as engaged to set up with old Fairfield in the gout, and fell that fast asleep across 'is feet thro' a-settin' down the side of the bed, as is a bad 'abit in my opinion, and in course, poor fellow, he couldn't kick 'er off, nor yet wake 'er up, thro' 'er bein' that 'eavy, till he 'ad to shy the jug of toast-and-water at 'er, as cut 'er cheek, and werry nigh cost 'er 'er life, if it 'ad ketched her anywheres on the temple, as is a tender pint.

But wot 'is Royal 'Ighness wants most is to 'ave 'is sperrits kep' up; and if he'd jest take and listen to me for a bit I'd give 'im some 'ints; not as I could go down there now, bless 'im! 'cos he's out of danger, thro' it bein' near Christmas time, and Brown got one of 'is nasty coughs on 'im,

as makes me always fidgety about the bronchitis at the chest, tho' I think he's breathed easier the last two nights, and not so bad as old Mr. Somerweel were, three winters ago, they fetched me to see, and was as near gone as a toucher tho' them a-lightin' of a fire in 'is bed-room and forgettin' to put up the register, as is jest like one of them gals, and when I went into couldn't see across the room for smoke, and 'im a-chokin' in 'is tent bed, as he's always slep' in since 'er death, as I nussed 'er too myself, poor dear, and would 'ave got thro' it all but for 'er a-doctorin' 'erself, and would take three times as many pills at a dose as the doctor ordered when my back were turned, tho' I'd told 'er it were madness, the same as old Billers, as 'is wife would put a blister on in a fit of the spavins, as drawed 'im to death, and turned to hairysiplis, as carried 'im off in three days.

But I am that glad as Queen Wictoria 'ave got back to Win'sor, and is goin' to keep Christmas there, as must 'ave been dismal work for them young people at Osburn, with pre'aps only a small 'en turkey, and a tung with a plum-puddin' made in a shape, as is 'ow swells often has 'em, but ain't like the real thing; and I do 'ope as they'll 'ave a merry Christmas, and in course all the children will dine at table; but I do 'ope as they won't go a-lettin' them royal little ones eat too many rich

things; not but wot Queen Wictoria will 'ave 'er eye on 'em, and check them two, Prince Leopold and Beatrice, as bein' a young uncle and aunt, will be a-givin' the children sweet things on the quiet, never a-dreamin' as they'll do 'em 'arm; but if they only knowed one-tenth of the children as is ill arter Christmas, they'd never give 'em nothink without askin' of their royal ma's leave, as 'ave brought up 'er family a reg'lar model, as sometimes with all your tryin' you can't get 'em to be moderate in their food, as leads to grey powders and all manner; not as I 'olds with physicin', but thinks keepin' 'em low for a day or two is the best plan.

I says, "Any'ow, there's one good thing come out of this illness of the Prince of Wales, 'cos it shows one thing, that Mr. Gladstone, and Braidlaw, and that lot can set up wot they likes on Black-'eath, but they ain't a-goin' to give Queen Wictoria notice to quit for them to be Presidents, for in course every one is more for 'er than ever, arter all the trouble she's been to over the Prince of Wales, as 'ave drove everythink out of everybody's 'ead; and as to the Tichbung case, I'd pretty nigh clean forgot it.

But really, as I were a-sayin' to Mrs. Trimley, everybody were afraid as the Prince would die, and there would be a reg'lar red riverlution; not as ever

I thought it myself, for I says Queen Wictoria 'ave got a deal too much pluck to let them Socialists and John Bright 'ave the day, as would say like Queen 'Lizzbeth did to the Duke of Wellin'ton, 'Up, Guards, and at 'em!' as werry soon settled the Dutch at Tilbury Fort, as 'ave been one of our national defences ever since, and nobody in Gravesend wouldn't sleep safe in their beds if that were done away with, as is Briton's 'opes and glories.

But wot I thinks were 'ighly undecent were parties a-gettin' their mournin' early for the Prince, the same as I remembers old Mrs. Pounceby, as thought as 'er 'usban' wouldn't never get over the inflammation of 'is liver, and a-settin' up with 'im, were a-unpickin' a old black dress as she were goin' to 'ave re-dipped to wear at 'ome, and pisonin' 'er thumb, as carried 'er off under a month, and 'im married agin within the twelvemonth to 'is own barmaid, and a pretty life she led 'im, and serve 'im right, too, an old fool.

But I says to Brown, "I must 'ear the end of this 'ere Tichbung case, 'avin' gone that fur in it as I considers would be mean for me to draw back; not as I've took no side, as I do not consider would be fair play, as is a jewel, as the sayin' is.

"Well," says Brown, "they're 'ard at it every day, and to-morrer they'll be a-lookin' over a lot of fortygrafts as was took on 'im when a boy."

"Ah!" I says, "I shouldn't never trust to no fortygrafts myself, 'cos they're werry oftin that deceptive, as I'm sure one I 'ad took at Rosherweel nobody wouldn't know, except any one as wanted to spite me."

"Ah!" says he, "there's a werry awkward bit of busyness, for someone's been and rubbed out 'is thumb."

"Ah!" I says, "no doubt, bit off by savidges, for I well remembers a-readin' of a party as them cannibal Highlanders got 'old on, and begun a-norin' at 'is estremities to eat 'im."

Says Brown, "Rubbish, I'm a-talkin' about the fortygrafts."

"Oh!" I says, "then it couldn't be the savidges, 'cos they'd know nothink about fortygrafts; but," I says, "wotever will 'is thumb bein' bit off prove?"

"Oh," says Brown, "I never can get it into your 'ead, for you will go off arter every fresh air as is started."

I says, "I only asks a simple question as might espect a civil answer."

"Well then," he says, "don't you? they've been and rubbed out of the fortygrafts one of 'is thumbs, as is deformed."

"But," I says, "wotever were the use of that, 'cos they couldn't rub it off 'is body, not if he 'ad a thumb as were deformed; but in course they wouldn't put that in his picter the same as a lady as

I knowed, as were painted in dimon's and feathers lovely, with a orful squint; but the painter he took and brought one of the feathers right down in front of 'er eye, a-droopin' over it like, so in course shet out 'er eye and the squint too."

"Ah!" says Brown, "all right," and went on a-readin' of 'is paper, with 'is elbers on the table, and 'is thumbs agin 'is ears, as ain't what I considers manners, nor yet sociable neither.

I didn't say nothink not then, but kep' myself to myself, as the sayin' is, all the evenin'; but next mornin' I were up like the lark, and down at Westminster like a bird by eleven o'clock.

I walks up to the door of the court, and asks the perlice if the court were full.

He says, "Yes, as full as it's a-goin' to be today."

"Oh," I says, "I wants to go in thro' 'avin' somethink to say to the Judge."

"Oh," he says, "you must rite it to 'im, for he can't attend to you now."

"But," I says, "will he get my letter?"

"Bless you, yes," says he; "why, he's said more than once in court as he's 'avin' letters every day."

Then I says, "I'm on."

Jest as I were a-speakin', up come Mrs. Bewlay, as I turned away from, not scornful, but a-drorin' myself up.

Well, I suppose that made 'er wild, for she says to the perlice, "That's the old lady as knows all about it."

I says, "Mum, I'd thank you to keep your remarks to yourself, as were not addressin' you in no ways."

She says, "Perlice, you'd better take 'er into court."

I says, "Perlice, you'd better keep some parties out."

Says the perlice, "We don't want no rows here, so drop it."

I says, "Can I go into court."

He says, "The court is just a-breakin' up," and jest as he were a-speakin, out they all come, and a party as knowed me come up, and says, "It's all over."

"Wot!" I says, "settled. Is he butcher or barrernite?"

He says, "No, only adjourned till the middle of January."

"Law," I says; "then we're in for another year on it."

"Ah!" he says, "goodness knows when it will hend," and jumps in a cab, and off he goes.

So I thought as I'd walk on slow myself towards Cherrin' Cross, and so I did, without a-takin' no notice on anybody.

One or two boys run in front on me, a-lookin' me in the face, and then a feller come and looked under my bonnet, and bust out a-larfin'.

I turns round and see that wile old hussey, Mrs. Jarvis, leastways Bewlay I would say, a-pintin' to me, and a-talkin', so I shakes my umbreller at 'er, and a lot of boys give a shout, and came a-runnin' over to me; a reg'lar crowd come round, a-shovin' and a-pushin' me about, and a-ollerin', "Go it, fatty."

So I give a rush inside of a iron railin' as were inside a churchyard, and turn on 'em, and says, "Wotever do you want?"

They all says "'Ooray! stick up for your rights." "Ah! yah," says others, "take 'em off, shame."

Well, I were that reg'lar bewildered, I didn't know wot were up till a policeman come along, as I calls to for 'elp.

Well, he pretty soon made them boys lewant, as the sayin' is, and then turns to me, and says, "Which way are you a-goin'?"

I says, "Anywhere as I'm safe."

"Well," he says, "you'd best 'ave a cab."

"But," I says, "why can't I walk quiet thro' the streets?"

"Why," he says, "some one's been and put it about as you was the claimint a-escapin' in woman's clothes."

I says, "That's that good-for-nothink faggot, Mrs. Bewlay's doin's, and I'll make 'er pay for it."

He says, "All right, but 'ere's a cab, and you'd better get in," and so I did, and drove straight to Mrs. Padwick's, and no sooner in 'er room than I werry nigh went off into the sterrics, and should 'ave done but for bustin' into tears, as was a went like, but didn't save me from the wust cold as I've 'ad many a day, as seems to cling to me like. And all as I've got to say is, that if I was the Judge and Jury, I should take and hemigrate clean out of the country to 'Merriker under false names afore ever the 15th of January comes round, 'cos now they've got to 'ear it all over agin told the other way, as pre'aps will throw some new lights on it, cos we all knows as one story's werry good till the other's told, as the sayin' is; and no doubt the other side 'ave got somethink to say, or they'd 'ave give it up at once to 'im; but all as I've got to say is, that it's a reg'lar puzzler, and as to layin' any one 'arf-a-crown on it, I wouldn't, tho' I'm told as there's thousands as 'ave, and some 'undreds of pounds. So there's no tellin', and no doubt this 'ere claimint will 'ave 'eavy bets agin 'isself, so as to 'edge agin a loss, leastways that were wot I 'eard a party a-tellin' Brown, not as paid much attention, and can only say agin as

I've said, and should to the Judge 'isself, "May the best man win," as in course I means the right man, 'cos there's only a man and a child in it, and in course the child is good, which do not prove as the man is best.

It were jest on Christmas Eve, as I were a-feelin' a little better of my cold, tho' it were still tight across the chest at night, as is 'why I took somethink of the last thing as seemed to lull me off, tho' some'ow or other that Tichbung case would worrit me constant, partickler as Brown were that short about it, a-sayin' as I were in sich a muddle over it as he couldn't make me understand nothink.

So I says to myself, "I won't say a word more to 'im, but jest take and work it out like, in my own 'ead; and when I've made it all clear there, nobody won't stare more than Brown."

I felt sure as I should make somethink on it, for I were a good 'and at riddles, and 'ave guessed 'em when every one else 'ad give 'em up for a bad job.

I weren't werry busy over Christmas, for we was a-goin' to dine along with Mrs. Padwick, as 'ad a party thro' 'er parlors bein' empty till the new year were turned; so I only 'ad my mincemeat to think on, and two puddin's as I always makes, and a little one for the gal, all to 'erself, as may cut

it as she likes, for I can't abear 'avin' my things messed about.

All the time as I were a-stonin' my plums and a-choppin' my suet, I couldn't help a-thinkin' that trial over and over, and a-fancyin' as 'ow as it did ought to be cleared up long afore another Christmas come round; but, law! I says, who knows? for I'm told as it's a-goin' into Chancery when this 'ere judge 'ave done with it; and I've 'eard say as things 'ave been there since the beginnin' of the world, and will stop there till the end on it.

I don't know as I should 'ave took it up ag'in that 'ot if Mrs. Pulbrook 'adn't dropped in one evenin' to tea, and says to me, "Ain't it singler as nobody don't seem to know this 'ere Ortin for certing."

Well, I says, "That's wot puzzles me, for it's a name as I knows as well as my own, leastways am certing as I've 'eard it afore."

"Well," she says, in saying good-bye, for she couldn't stop, and 'ad took 'er tea in 'er bonnet, "if you can spot that man Ortin any'ow, it would settle the thing, as would be the hact of a Christshun."

Well, when she were gone, and I begun for to think some'ow or other, I couldn't get it out of my 'ead as I know'd that man Ortin, as it's wonderful I 'adn't thought on before, as every one were a-talkin'

about 'im, yet for the life on me I couldn't tell where I'd knowed 'im, till all of a sudden it come over me like a flash of lightnin', as that were the name as lodged with Mrs. Parkis over seventeen years ago, three doors off, when we was a-livin' near Stepney Green, as is now dead and gone, and run away in the night, thro' a-throwin' of 'is things out of the winder to a pal, and then a-walkin' out of the 'ouse on the quiet in the mornin' when the milk comes round.

Well, it reg'lar worreted me 'ow to let the Judge know about it, as I felt were a dooty, tho' I knowed as Brown would redicule the ideer. So I were a-talkin' it all over a day or two arter, along with old Mrs. Berry, as is that 'ard of 'earin' as you 'as to 'oller like a gale of wind in 'er ear to make 'er understand; and in my opinion it's not only 'er 'earin' as is 'ard, but 'er comprehension, as 'ad fits in her infancy, as I've 'eard my dear mother say on 'er, as she never 'adn't no gumption in 'er 'ead.

So the old lady says to me, "Martha Brown," she says, thro' knowin' of me afore I were short-coated; she says, "you did ought to let the Judge know, as ain't fair as he should be kep' in the dark, as will repent it some day."

"Well," I says, "I can't get at 'im for to speak; but," I says, "I certingly might do as a-many more 'as done afore me, and will do arter me. I could write

to 'im so as he shouldn't be took suddin' at a non-plush, as the sayin' is on the bench, when the Court meets agin; cos," I says, "he'll no doubt understand my 'ints as I shall throw out; for a nod's as good as a wink to a blind 'orse; and no doubt give 'im a 'int and he'll take a ell, and put it afore the Jury that clear as 'll never make up their minds in this world without some one a-givin' them the straight tip. So somethink must be done."

"Well," says Mrs. Berry, "you do it, then, for you always was a good judge, and if this 'ere judge is as blind as a old 'orse, why, in course, he must want a-'elpin' 'and, but don't use bad langwidge yourself over it."

I says, "Who said as he were blind, or used bad langwidge?"

"Why," she says, "you did."

I says, "Never."

She says, "You did; and said as he couldn't tell a nod from a wink, and would send 'em all to—never mind where."

Well, I see it weren't no use a-argufyin' the topic with 'er; so I says, "All right."

She says, "You'll write, will you; then let me see the letter?"

Well, it wasn't no use a-tryin' to put 'er off, as she'd come to stop for a day or two thro' bein' like a relation, and I know'd I were to come in for

'er little all, as Berry left me in case as she should die without a issue, as there ain't no sign on, for she 'ave wonderful 'ealth tho' 'ard on eighty.

So, to pacify the old soul, I got a sheet of foolscap and a werry nice steel pen, not as they're things I 'olds with thro' bein' that spluttery and seems to always get 'airs in 'em; and as to the ink, I can't never keep a drop, for that gal is always a-'ritin' with it as thick as mud; but I thought pre'aps as I might do good a-settin' things down clear for that Judge, in case of bein' asked, partikler as Mrs. Berry seemed that bent on it.

So I set down, and were a-collectin' of my thoughts, like when I 'ad to jump up for to take in the milk thro' the gal a-bein' jest gone up stairs to clean 'erself, for I've only got one, and thankful for it, cos when I kep two, wot with their quarrels and their sweet'arts, I were nearly drove mad.

Well, when I come back, Mrs. Berry were as short as pie-crust with me for jumpin' up, as said, "Martha, I shan't never make a lady of you," as is pretty well for 'er, as were only brought up to the shoe-bindin' trade 'erself, as ain't no disgrace, but not esactually work for carriage folks.

So I give the gal a call for to stir 'er stumps over 'er dressin', and down I sets and begin a-'ritin'; but I do think as Mrs. Berry is gone the other arf foolish, for she would keep a-puttin' in 'er word, till really

I 'ardly didn't know wot I were a-'ritin' about, and couldn't make a beginnin' thro' not a-knowin' how to begin, as I knowed as my dear judge wouldn't do, tho' Mrs. Berry said as it would, and she were werry sure as that is the way as Queen Wictoria 'rites 'em.

"Ah!" I says, "pre'aps she do, as in course is 'er haffible ways, as is a good missus; but," I says, "I ain't Queen Wictoria, and do not wish to be, as would be 'igh treason, with my 'ead on Temple Bar afore I could say Jack Robison."

So says Mrs. Berry, "Oh! don't go for to jaw a 'orse's 'ind leg off, don't; but go on."

Well, I see she were a-gettin' a little drowsy, so kep' on at my 'ritin' in the 'opes as she'd drop off; but, law bless you, not a bit on it, for she kep' on a-wakin' up and makin' me read wot I'd 'rote, and a-dictatin' and a-alterin' till I were that confused in my 'ead as never was.

So I thinks to myself, "I'll 'rite it now and burn it when she's gone off," and so I did, as is pre'aps a-makin' of that as clear as daylight, as some may call as dark as pitch; tho' I certingly did not mean the old lady for to take and send it off with my back turned for arf a 'our arter tea, tho' all as I've said is truth as they might put me on the rack for, if they likes, tho' in course that Judge may never get my letter, and that's why I'm thankful

as I kep' it when it were sent back, thro' the post not bein' able to make out the address as that foolish old woman went and put, and a-signin' my name and address, as in course meant it to be sinonymous, as the sayin' is.

For she'd 'rote on the antelope, "To the Lord High Admiralty Court, Westminster 'All, London, Hingland"; and no doubt, if the Judge see all it, he'd 'ave sent for me, and a nice bullyraggin' I should have got from them lawyers as would take the eyes out my 'ead in no time, 'cos, as I says in my letter, I says, "My Lord," I says, "let both sides be 'eard," I says, "and not everyone go away a-grumblin', tho' I pities you from the werry bottom of my 'art, and feels for you too a-settin' there so long; but that's no reason as them hushers should drive and prog me about with that wiolence as I could show the marks all over me, thro' bein' a tender skin; but, as I were a-sayin', if he should deny a-goin' to Woppin', I can prove as he did, leastways a party as I should say were werry like 'im, tho' not quite so tall, with a swivel eye and corpilent all ways, tho' a fine man in the main. It were two days arter Christmas as I reg'larly spotted 'im as 'ad been a-runnin' in my 'ead that constant that I took and called Mrs. Padwick's brother-in-law in the name of Smith, Ortin twice at supper Christmas night, as made Brown say as he were

sure I didn't want no more rum-punch, not as I'd took more than a mouthful or two."

We was a-stoppin' along with Mrs. Padwick for Christmas week, but I were obligated to go 'ome to look arter things, tho' the gal 'ad 'er mother with 'er, besides wanting to see Mrs. Podmore, poor thing, as I'd promised faithful I would within the month.

I must certingly allow as I did not remember 'im at fust, thro' bein' that run to flesh since he lodged with Mrs. Parkis in the name of Ortin, as I can take my oath to, leastways were the name as she took and summonsed in, tho' never got a fardin' on it, thro' some mistake, as were nineteen weeks rent, let alone teas and breakfasts, with heggs and bacon, and a score at the public for beer and sperrits, as she fetched in 'er own name, so in course were liable to,

"I will say," I says, "My Lud, it's 'ard on a lone 'ooman, tho' some may say as it weren't no busyness of mine, but am not one to stand by and see any one injured without a-openin' of my mouth, and did seem sing'lar as he should 'ave pitched on to me like that, with 'im a-gettin' into that same bus, tho' I shouldn't never pre'aps 'ave come for-'ard but for 'is impidence and insults, a-settin' a dog at 'me, with a pail of cold water threatened, tho' dressed the lady from top to toes, as the sayin'

is, and a-feelin' as that Judge and Jury is in a nice preliminary over 'im, the same as I was myself arter them houtrages.

Not as I were a-goin' to Woppin' myself, but, as I were a-sayin', to the Mile End Road, to see a friend with 'er fifth, as is Mrs. Podmore, when he 'ailed the bus close agin the Post Office, and slipped a-walkin' across the road, thro' the mud, and a boy with a tray on 'is 'ead 'ollered out to 'im, "Keep your body up, Tichbung;" and as he were a-gettin' into the bus, another boy says, "Go it, Roger," as made me think there must be a-somethink in it, thro' 'im a-lookin' that confused, so keepin' my eye on 'im, as 'ad a leery look with 'im, and as to 'is figger, it were that portly as 'ad to come into the bus sideways, and werry nigh pitched shoulder ways into my lap, and 'adn't been in not five minnits, and we was in Leaden'all Street, when he busts out sudden, and says, "This ain't the way to Woppin'."

I says, "Certingly not; as is a part I knows well, thro' a spendin' a deal of time when a gal close agin Redriff Church."

"Ah!" he says, "you knows all about it, then."

I says "Knows all about wot?"

"Why," he says, with a wink, "the time of day," and out of the 'bus he gets.

"Well," I says, "My gentleman, you don't get

rid of me so easy, for you're Ortin as sure as eggs is eggs; so out I gets, too, and see 'im a-makin' of 'is way thro' the Blackwall Railway, so on I steps arter 'im pretty quick, and if he didn't take and turn away in Fenchurch Street, and goes down Mark Lane.

I kep' up with 'im, for he were slow in 'is movements, and see 'im make for Tower 'Ill.

"Now," I says, "I've cotched you, for I'm certing on it, as was only suspicious afore, thro' a word let drop by that 'ere pastrycook's boy, as 'ollered arter 'im into the bus, as shows 'ow a trifle may turn out, and in course 'is gettin' into the wrong bus were only a blind to deceive them as watches 'im night and day, I've 'eard say, as were no doubt throwed off their sents by him a-doublin' like that on 'em, as is jest like a gray'ound arter a 'are, as is wot he pretends to be in this case."

But thro' me not a-bein' one of them birds as is cort with chaff, as the sayin' is, I weren't to be done like that, so on I goes arter my lord over Tower 'Ill, and never in my born days did I walk thro' sich mud, as were that slippy that down I must 'ave been over and over agin, but for my umbreller, as I made a walkin'-stick on, but were brought up werry short once or twice, thro' a-puttin' of it down between the pavin'-stones, where it stuck.

We'd jest got beyond them Kathering Docks, as my dear mother well remembered all a square, as is now moved up into the Regency Park, and they calls it a charity, as I 'ears the Lord Chancery 'ave been a-lookin' into; but even he can't make much on it, for all that, as I knows a deal about myself, tho' not time to talk about it now, up to my elbers with this 'ere Tichbung case, as is quite harmful enuf for any one at a time.

Well, close agin them Docks, as is a dead wall a-leadin' on to Wappin, as did used to be the way to the Tems Tunnel, as they've been and stopped up, and do say they're a-goin' to make under the sea in France; and why not? as must be a deal heasier work than cuttin' thro' them Halps, as I see 'em at work at myself, and 'owever they could jest meet at the same pint I can't think, as finds it 'ard work sometimes myself to run two tapes thro a 'em contrairy ways.

Well, as I were a-sayin', I follers that party all along that dead wall till we come into Wappin; and I felt as my legs was reg'lar failin' me, with a pain up the back as made me afeard as I must give in thro' my roomattics were a-'angin' over me, as no doubt was brought on thro' me a-slippin' about so in that mud, as is a downright shame the way it's left on the pavement, and 'undreds of poor men as would jump at the job to sweep it up.

I've 'eard say as there is a law as every 'ouse-keeper is bound to keep the pavement clean; but I says, let them as don't keep no 'ousekeepers employ them poor men, jest like the parish, as gives two shillin's a day on the road, as is little enuf for a family to live on, goodness knows, and them poor creeturs at it in the dead of the night; but better than the stone-yard, as some can only earn thrippence a day at.

There's wuss work for the women than the men, for I were 'earin' the other day of a poor creetur as works for one of these 'ere 'olesale 'ouses as made women's coarse cloaks, and only got a penny a piece for 'em, with 'avin' to go and fetch the work and take it 'ome agin; and if that ain't a defrordin' the labourer of 'is 'ire, wot is, I should like to know?

I 'adn't got werry far down that street when I see my gentleman go into a 'ouse.

So I says, "Oh, oh!" I says, "more blinds," and steps into a public jest oppersite, where I could keep my heye on that door where he'd been and went in at.

As luck would 'ave it, there were a woodin stool a-standin' in front of that bar, as I tottered to, and down I set; and if ever I did enjoy anythink in this world it were a couple of cold sassiges and

a French roll with a pint of cooper, as I were a-famishin' for.

I think I must 'ave set there a good 'arf 'our, if not more, when I see that party come and look out at the door, and then go in agin.

I asked the party at the bar of that public if he knowed the name as rented that 'ouse, as give me a werry short answer, a-sayin' as he'd quite enuf to do to mind 'is own busyness, and never bothered about naybors.

"Ah! but," I says, "you might make a fortin if you could bring it 'ome to 'im, as I'm pretty sure is the man."

"Who?" says he.

"Why," says I, "it's my opinion as that there man as 'ave put 'is 'ead out at that door oppersite, as I watched 'im into myself all the way from the Mile-end bus, is Ortin, as you've 'eard tell on along of the Tichbung case." But he only says bosh.

Well, two men as were a-standin' there a-finishin' a pint went out, and soon arter I 'eard a hoorayin' outside, and goes to the door, and there was a reg'lar crowd round that 'ouse, and parties a-hollerin', "Bravo!" "Barrernite!" "Get your rights, Tichbung."

"Ah!" I says, "then they've found 'im out."

Jest then that man come to the door agin, and there was a reg'lar cheerin'.

He come down the steps, and spoke to one or two, and asks one man in' a mild woice, "Who says as I'm Tichbung?" So the feller he took and pinted at me as were a-standin' at the door of that public.

That man come over to me with a stride and says, "That's wot you've been a-follerin' me all about for, and now see if I don't 'ave you punished."

I says, "I never said as you was Tichbung, but only as I knowed you to be Ortin."

"Well," he says, "Wot of that? I don't deny as my name is Ortin. H-o-r-t-o-n, Ortin.

"Well," I says, "didn't I say so?"

"No," says that publican as 'ad come out at 'is door, "you said Ortin, and this gentleman's name is spelt with a H."

I says, "Wotever difference does that make?"

Says the man, "Why, a deal."

I says, "A-beggin' your pardin', it's a letter as is easily left out, jest as some puts it in without it's a-makin' no difference."

Says the feller, "Give me your name and address?"

I says, "I shan't?"

Then says he, "I'll find it;" and takes and snatches my redicule out of my 'and, and bolts across the road into the 'ouse, and slams the door.

I says, "I aint a-goin' to be robbed like this;" and over I goes and 'ammers at the door tremenjous loud.

That feller he opens a winder and throws me out my redicule, a-sayin', "I knows you now, and I'll make you pay for it, my lady;" and shets down the winder.

Well, that crowd kep' on a-jeerin', and a-larfin', and a peltin' at me with mud and bits of stone, till there was a reg'lar row round the 'ouse.

Arter a bit that winder were opened agin, and a fieldmale 'ead come out, as said, "You go away, or I'll give you some cold pig, and set the dog at you."

I says, "I'll make you pay for this, as shall be worst than the Tichbung case for you."

I 'adn't got the words out when down there comes over me arf a pail of soap-suds, as regl'ar soused me from 'ead to foot; and jest then a bull-dog rushed up the hairy steps, and pinned me by my gownd to the door-step.

It's my opinion as he'd 'ave bated me like a live bull, but for the perlice as come up, and a boy as bit 'im thro' the tail and made 'im leave go.

I says, "Perlice, I've been arf murdered."

Says that publican comin' up, "It's all your own fault, as I've arf a mind to 'ave you locked up for kickin' up a row in the street."

"Why," I says, "I'm drenched, and my wel-

weteen jacket as is trimmed with bugles reg'lar spilte."

"Well," says the perlice, "you must get your remedy lawful, and not be a-creatin' no disturbance 'ere."

Well that publican's good lady, she come out and stood my friend, and told 'er 'usban' as he were a coward for to turn agin a lone woman in distress, and made me come in to the bar parlor, and 'ad my jacket wiped down, and give me a cup of tea while my things was a-dryin'; but as to my bonnet, as is a black chip trimmed with yaller and red flowers, it's downright ruined; and the soap-suds as stuck to my welwetween, as I don't believe as even scourin' will get em out.

But, tho' I 'ad to 'ave a cab all the way back to Mrs. Padwick's, I'll keep my eye on Ortin, and when the time comes will 'ave my say about 'im to Judge and Jury too.

But as to my letter to the Judge, tho' it would 'ave done 'im all the good in the world to 'ave read it, yet I'm glad as I got it back, and it certingly were very perlite in Queen Wictoria for to send it back to me with that message, "Her Majesty Service" on it, as is too much the lady to 'ave read it as were not addressed to 'er; and so I told Brown about it, as bust out a-larfin' like a mounting torrent, and says, "Why, wot do you mean?"

I says, "Why, I means wot I says, as Queen Wictoria sent it me back with 'Her Service' to me, the same as old Mr. Wilten, as were Lady Wittles's father, always said afore drinkin' a glass of wine, as is old-fashioned ways, no doubt, and in course Queen Wictoria keeps up them old customs, just like Queen Lizzybeth."

Brown, he says, "It'll end, Martha, in me bein' obligated for to 'ave you locked up, for you're a-gettin' more of a lunytick every day you lives; why, that's put on all returned letters; but," he says, "do, for goodness' sake, give up a-meddlin, with this 'ere Tichbung busyness, cos," he says, "they'll be a-inditin' you for a conspiracy."

"Wot," I says, "like Guy Fox and the fifth of Nowember, as were rolled down a 'ill in a barrel full of spikes, as would be a orful end."

"Well," he says, "you'd better look out, I can tell you."

It give me sich a turn, Brown a-sayin' that to me about the conspiracy that I could not rest, thro' well a-knowin' as both Mrs. Bewlay and that dorter of 'ern were both agin me, and livin' that close agin Westminster might be a-droppin' in constant at that cort, and a-pisonin' of the Judge's mind agin me, partikler as in course that husher would be agin me too, and I don't think as none of the Jury partikler fancied me; so wotever chance should I

'ave if brought to trial, and for doin' nothink, I begun to wish as I'd never see the papers, and so I said to old Mr. Taplin, as lives close by us thro' rentin' of a stable, as were in the corn-chandlery line, tho' retired with a nice little independence.

So I thought as I'd ask 'im about it, thro' bein' owner of a good many small 'ouses, and always at law with 'is tenants.

He's a crusty sort of a customer, and told me to my face as I were a deal too fond of talkin', and he says, "You'd better square it, or you'll 'ave all them lawyers on your back."

"Mussy on us," I says; "why, they'd be my ruin, as couldn't never pay them fees as they asks."

Then he says, "Square it at once, and don't lose no time."

It were werry well for 'im to talk about squarin' of it, but I didn't know what I'd got to square, nor yet who it were as I must square it with, unless the claimint 'isself; but I didn't like to ask old Taplin no more about it, for he were in a werry bad 'umour aperiently, so I wished 'im good-mornin', and 'ome I goes a-thinkin' what I'd best do.

It were the werry Monday a-follerin' as I 'ad to go as far as Kilburn arter the character of a gal as I'd almost ingaged, only wouldn't 'ave no ritten characters with 'er, as is openin' of a door to deception, as the sayin' is.

It were not exactually at Kilburn as the lady lived but close agin St. John's Wood, as is all that built over as nobody wouldn't know it as 'adn't seen it since a child, as were me, for I can jest remember a-bein' took to see a old gent as lived out that way in a white cottage, with nothink but fields, and cows, and white roses all a-growin' over it.

The lady were werry perlite, and that glad to see me, as she made me 'ave a glass of sherry wine and a seedy biscit, as is neither on 'em things as I cares for, and give the gal a werry good character, and come to the door with me arter a bit of chat, as in course brought in the Tichbung case; and as she were a-showin' me out, says, "That's where the Claimint lives, jest round the corner, as is two 'ouses from the hend."

"Oh, indeed!" and a-biddin' of 'er good-day, walks on till I comes round the corner, where the walls of the 'ouses is that low as you can see over into the gardings, and there, sure enuf, were a stout party a-smokin' of 'is cigar in one on 'em.

I says to myself there he is as sure as a gun, and certingly should like to speak to 'im if it's only to say as I ain't took no party sperrit agin 'im.

I couldn't make up my mind not to speak fust, so I walked up and down once or twice, jest a-castin' of a eye over the wall at 'im.

At last I stops and gives a good look at 'im, as

made 'im stare agin and smile; and then he says, "Are you a-waitin' for anybody?"

"Well," I says, "I am and I ain't, as the sayin' is; for," I says, "I didn't mean to speak fust, but now, as the hice is broke, may go on."

He says, "The hice would precious soon be broke if you and me was to go on it together."

So I see as he were in a chaffy 'umour, and says, "Ah, but that wouldn't be nothink to you, as is used to shipwrecks and sich like from hinfancy."

"Ah!" he says, "I've been twice round the world both ways."

I says, "'Ave you, tho'; why, that ain't come out in evidence."

"Oh, but," he says, "it will 'ave to do a deal more besides, as won't be kep' out of my rights, and locked up 'ere much longer."

"But," I says, "I thought as your case were finished up."

"Law bless you!" says he, "it ain't 'ardly begun."

"Not begun!" I says; "wotever do you mean?"

"Why," he says, "it ain't the property as I cares for, as 'ave got enuf for me, but," he says, "I'll punish them as 'ave took away my liberty, and been agin me all thro', if I undermines them fust, and then 'unts 'em to death with wild tarriers."

"Law!" I says, "you didn't ought to be so windictive."

He says, "Do you know who I am?"

"Well," I says, "I couldn't swear to it, tho' I 'ave 'eard who you says you are."

He says, "I'm Solymen."

"Oh," I says, "indeed! but," I says, "there's a many as sets up for Solymens now-a-days as can't prove it by their words."

"Wot!" he says, "are you agin me like the rest of the world, as is all tryin' to 'ound me to death?"

I says, "Oh dear, no!" I says, "I ain't agin you, and that's wot I come to say, as I'm only for the right, so don't you believe as I'm a-tryin' to injure you."

He says, "You'd better not, for," he says, "I'm a demin when roused," and begun a-throwin' 'is harms about.

I says, "Do be quiet, and jest listen to reason, as my adwice is as you goes into court, and jest says to the Judge, 'My Lud, I'll tell you my 'istory without no fendin' or provin', as will settle my rights in ten minutes, and show as I ain't no impostor?'"

He'd come up to the other side of the wall, a-leanin' of his chin on it, and when I said them words, then he says, "You're a dear, good old

soul, and if you'll only jest give me your 'and for a minnit ——"

I 'olds out my 'and, a-thinkin' he were a-goin' to shake it friendly like, but instead of that he reg'lar clutched at it enuf to drag my harm out of my sockets.

I says, "Let go, that's a good man."

He says, "Give me a pull, and it will be all right."

I says, "I'll do my best, but you're such a tremenjous weight 'angin' on to any one's harm."

He says, "You pull, and I'll give a spring;" and so he did that wiolent, as he sent me reg'lar back'ards with that shock as my foot slipped, and down I fell, and should 'ave rolled into the road, if there 'adn't been a providentshul post as stopped me.

Didn't that party shout out, and say, "'Ooray! I've done for 'er, 'ooray! a old catamaran!" and then went and dropped back into the garding.

A lady as were passin' give me 'er 'and; and wot with 'er and the post, I managed to get on my feet agin, jest as a party come out at the back garding gate of that 'ouse where I'd see Tichbung in the garding, and says, "Which of you two 'ave been assistin' that loonytick to escape?"

I says, "He's no more a loonytick than you are, and it's a shame as he's kep' 'ere, poor feller."

Says the lady to me, "They do take the insane 'ere."

I says, "But nobody don't say as that Claimint is insane."

Says the man as 'ad come out of the gate, "If ever I ketches you near the place agin, I'll have you taken up, as this gentleman is 'ere by order of the Court of Chancery."

I says, "More shame for the Court; but," I says, "mark my words, I'll espose you, and the Judge shall know all about it; so don't think as you're a-goin' to carry it with a 'igh 'and agin me, as knows my way about."

That feller slammed the gate a-goin' in, but I give 'im a bit of my mind over the wall till he'd got into the 'ouse agin.

So I says to that lady, "Wot a shame, to be sure, as they should lock a party up like that!"

She says, "No doubt the poor gentleman is insane."

I says, "Then it's law as 'ave done it; not as it can be justice to take and lock 'im up; but I suppose that both Judge and Jury is that sick on it, as they've brought it in trumpery insanity, and so settled it; but I don't consider that right, 'cos, if so, why didn't they do it at fust, and save all the espence and time."

"Then," she says, "you knows the case?"

"Well," I says, "not esectually, tho' I've been in cort, and read all about it."

"Oh!" she says, "I were not aware as the case were not public."

I says, "Not public, arter all this time!"

She says, "Wot case are you illudin' to?"

I says, "Why, the Tichbung, as I do say it's a shame to lock 'im up there."

She says, "Did you think that stout gentleman were Sir Roger?"

"Well," I says, "he told me he were."

"Oh!" she says, "poor fellow! he's under delusions, and fancies 'imself all sorts of people."

"Then," I says, "let Judge and Jury settle it all open and aboveboard, and not go a-'idin' 'im along with the Lord Chancery in this 'ere out-of-the-way end of the world."

That lady give me a bow, and walks in at 'er gate, as I think were 'urt at my remarks about the party, for parties is always touchy about them nay-bour'oods where they live.

So bein' got 'ome agin, I sets down and 'rites a reg'lar letter to that Judge, and says, "Mrs. Brown presents 'er compliment to the Lord Cheef Justis of the Tichbung Common Please, and will feel obligated if your Ludship will read my letter attentive, as you will feel the benefit on, as she is werry sure

when you comes to sum up, as never were a good 'and at summin' myself, leastways not on a slate, tho' anythink in my 'ead, comes out all right to a fardin, as I am with the milk score, as is the only one I runs, tho' never a-'oldin' with nothink left owin' at the public.

"No doubt, my Lud, you is much took up, and 'ad my other letter come to 'and, as Queen Wictoria sent it me back 'erself, like the lady as she is, would no doubt 'ave showed you as I am one as takes notice and 'ave been in court.

"Not as Mrs. Brown ever could get in at Westminster 'All along with the rest of the Royal family, cos of the crowd, as must 'ave made it werry unpleasant for you, my Lud; and as to a-settin' there and doin' of any summin' up or down, as I did used my long addition, as I never got right, why, I don't believe as you can as much as carry one in your 'ead with all that confusion goin' on.

"But as I were a-sayin', Mrs. Brown 'avin' 'eard a deal of this 'ere case thro' 'er good gentleman, as is one as when he do give 'is mind to a thing, gives it; and tho' he 'ave not yet said whether he is the right man or whether he isn't, yet thinks the more, as the sayin' is; and I can tell by the look on 'im as there's thoughts in 'is 'ead as a many would be glad on; not as I'm alludin' to you, my Lud, as no doubt 'ave your 'ead screwed

on the right way; tho' as I were observin' myself, your wig were all awry the day as I see you, and quite as much as ever my own bonnet were; and I should like to know whose wig or bonnet wouldn't be upset a-fightin' of their way thro' such a crowd, and 'ow they ever got you up to that bench I can't make out, escept it were over other people's 'eads, as I'm told ain't lawful, and there's been a row about some one a-doin' in another cort.

"But as Mrs. Brown would wish to say, my Lud, this is a case as would puzzle a conjuror, tho' I certingly 'ave see one as did wonderful things with a empty basket, and brought a live rabbit out of my own pocket'ankercher, as were a thing as I 'adn't had in the 'ouse over two years, and sold the skin to a lady as come round with 'arthstones last winter.

"No doubt you will nat'ral ask, my Lud, wotever this 'ave got to do with Tichbung, as I will tell you, 'cos if it can't be done by fair means it must by foul, not as I means murder, nor yet shettin' of 'im up in a mad'ouse, as is next door to it; but, whyever not 'ave a clairwoyante, as is 'ow I'm told as a murder is found out every night in the Strand; thro' a young man as I knows as is a droomatic cricket, as were done in France 'andreds of years ago, and thought nothink on in them dark hages, thro' bein' only a Jew, as is a secks wot I don't 'old

with myself, thro' bein' partial to pork, and yet did ought to 'ave justice.

"But Mrs. Brown do feel it 'er boundin' dooty to come for'ard, tho' that husher did shet the door in my face, or next thing to it, by nearly a-ketchin' of my foot, as if it 'ad took me across my jinte, would 'ave been wuss than a dagger thro' my 'art, a-sayin' as it were your Ludship's orders, as I don't believe, and shan't pay no attentions to, but will speak out.

"It is only the truth as will out, as there were a time when I could not 'ave rote as much to your Ludship, but thro' 'avin' took six lessons of a gent as 'ave got lovely speciments at 'is door in a glass-case, am able for to rite with that ease, as shows the scolard.

"But as I were a-sayin', my Lud, do 'ave the clarewoyante for to ask the Claimint wot he've been up to all these years, cos he's that 'sharp, as you won't get nothink out on 'im by a-cross-question, but a crooked anser, as the sayin' is, now as the rack is give up, as did used to make parties speak the truth, I've 'eard say, in double quick time.

"Not as Mrs. Brown would 'old with a-torturin' nothink, but I do think as the cat were a good thing for them garotters, tho' they did not ought to 'ave give the job to that poor old Calcraft, as can't 'ave 'ardly the strength left to 'ang anybody com-

fortably now, let alone give it 'ot them cowardly willins.

"Not as I means as your Ludship did ought to 'ave that clarewoyante in court, but might be done on the quiet, thro' a-askin' 'im to dinner, and then occussin' of 'im, as would soon get the truth out.

"But wot Mrs, Brown 'ave got to say is, that in 'er opinion, tho' he do say to the contrairy, as that man as throwed the pail of soap-suds over me in Wappin is Ortin, and tho' parties may say to the contrairy, if that ain't the Claimint as she saw a-smokin' in one of them low-walled gardin's, out St. John's Wood way, why it's werry like 'im, leastways in figger, any'ow.

"But you will escuse 'aste, my Lud, as is all as I've got to say; tho' not a-goin' to give it up; for if I were judge and jury too, why Martha Brown wouldn't never rest till she ferreted the matter thro' and thro'; as my argyments is plain enuf, for we all knows as everyone as is born must 'ave a father and mother, tho' no doubt there's a many as can't esactually indemnify theirselves over 'em, as ain't the case with this 'ere Tichbung, as were born reg'lar enuf tho' a French mother, as in course makes a difficulty, as we all must allow; but then the father he comes in as claims 'is hofspring, and edicates 'im proper, leastways, means to, but in course, if he can't remember nothink about the

school as he went to, why it's quite aperient as he never paid no attentions to 'is books, and as he didn't remember no games, why it weren't much good 'is bein' kep' at school, tho' he must 'ave been a nice boy to 'ave 'ad at 'ome, according to 'is own accounts.

"Well then, as I says, my Lud, we knows as he went to sea, and there we loses sight on 'im, as is easy done at sea, as no one knows better than me, as 'ad my 'at, 'air, and all blowed overboard, close ag'in Merryker in 'alf a gale, and not a westment on it to been seen in no time.

"But, as I were a-sayin' he were well beknown in Horsetrailier when he got there, thro' bein' picked up when shipwrecked, and wot become on 'im there is wot I wants to know.

"Whyever can't he bring someone as see 'im in the night as he swum ashore, or even the next mornin', as he must a've gone somewhere's to dry 'is clothes, if only on the rocks, and would nat'rally tell 'em all about it.

"There's one pint as I feels did ought to weigh werry 'eavy, and that is 'is drink, cos if it 'ave been and drownded 'is brains, why he never could be as sharp as he is, not as that's any proof, for I well remembers a young man as Mrs. Portlock nussed thro' them delirum trimmins, as were quite 'isself and set up a-talkin' about 'is poor mother five

minits afore he died, but he 'adn't no property, and only supported by 'is relations, as give 'im a werry 'ansom funeral, with a neat 'eadstone in Nun'ead Simitry, as were more than he deserved.

"But wotever you do, my Lud, pray be careful of your own 'ealth, cos if anythink were to 'appen to you there would be a mess, and tho' both Brown and me would come and give the Jury a leg up with the case with pleasure, yet they couldn't get on without the judge, for in course they can do with one jury the less, as I'm told there's only eleven on, yet if one judge were gone, 'ow about justice bein' done then?

"So, 'opin' as you will keep your 'ealth, and could tell you of a pill as 'ave done wonders for me, thro' requirin' of a stumackik, as they calls it, now and then, as any would arter a long confinement, so Mrs. Brown requests as any time you wants to see me, you will send 'er word, as is ready for to serve 'er queen and country, and would be found stuck to 'er post in the 'eat of haction, as I considers a sojer's duty all over the world, the same as Lord Nelson at the bottom of the Nile, as where the crockerdiles comes from, as sheds tears like King Edmund the Sixth a-signin' of 'is father's death warrant, as made Queen Ann take to 'er bed, leastways lay on cushins on the floor a-frettin' for 'im, tho' some say as she were too fond of a drop, as a good many of

them savidges is, as will barter away their 'ouses and lands, and ruin their wives and families for a bottle of rum, as is wot 'ave brought a many to the parish, the same as young Welbin, as were took away on a stretcher ravin' mad with drink in a straight westcote.

"So no more at present, with 'er 'umble dooty, and a-wishin' you well, thro' it, from your obedient 'umble servant, Martha Brown, without 'er mark, as did used to be a speciment of 'er 'and'ritin' afore 'avin' of six lessons from Mr. Scraw', as 'ave brought me to this, as shows the truth of the old hadder, live and learn, as the sayin' is.

"P.S. Mrs. Brown 'opes as the Lord Cheef Justis will consider this, as wot Mrs. Boulter's son says, as is'nt out of 'is articles, is called a privilege communication, for I wouldn't 'ave Brown know as I've 'rote for the world, and am not one as wouldn't 'rite no billydoos to no one, not the best Judge as ever lived, thro' a-knowin' my duty as a wife."

Well, when I'd been and 'rote it all, as took me days to do, thro bein' interrupted constant, I read it all over to Mrs. Boulten, as is laundress in the Temple, tho' not one as ever washes, and she said it were like print, and as she thought, I did ought to send a copy to Queen Wictoria; not but wot she says she'll see it, thro' you bein' obligated by law to send one to the British Museum.

"Lor," I says, "I never can rite it all over agin, not for all the British Museums in the world."

Then she says, "Look out as you ain't sent to the Tower, where they keeps all the State Papers over the gunpowder for safety, as were the Dook of Wellington's orders, as I knows thro' my fust 'usban' bein' a Hexia of the guard."

Well, it give me a bit of a turn at fust; but arter a bit I makes up my mind to risk it, and will take it down to the cort myself, the first thing next Monday mornin' as ever is, and give it in with my own 'ands, so as that Judge mayn't a-turn round and say, "Whyever didn't I hear all this afore?" and if, arter a-readin' on it, he can't come to no werdick, well, then, all as I've got to say is as it's a 'opeless case, and there ain't no tellin' who is who in this world, nor yet wot is wot; but shall keep a sharp look-out, and see as nobody ain't guilty of no perjury, as is a thing as I don't 'old with, and will come 'ome to 'em in the hend, whoever gets it, either butcher or barrynite.

I 'adn't 'ardly got my letter all done up, and sealed with my own thimble-top, when in who should come but young Boulten all of a 'urry, as says, "Please, Mrs. Brown, mother's sent me up without ever a-waitin' for my tea to say as she can get you in the cort Monday mornin', she thinks, thro' a friend of 'ern, as is a lady as sweeps it all out ready

for the Judge, and if you was to slip in the fust thing, might 'ide you under a bench or somewheres till it begun."

"Law," I says, "my dear, there would be a pretty how-d'ye-do if I was a-'idin' under a bench, and the Judge were to come in and set down suddin', as never could a-bear the stiffin' feelin' myself of bein' anywheres shet up, and if found out, they never wouldn't believe as I weren't a-tryin' some under'and tricks either for or agin 'im."

Says that boy, "Well, any'ow mother thought as you'd like the chance."

I says, "Wot is the lady's name as does the cort?"

"Oh!" he says, "I think it's Malkin; leastways that's wot's 'er married dorter's is, as 'ave a milk-walk."

"Well," I says, "give my respects to your mother, and say as I'll think about it; but," I says, "you step down in my front kitchen and 'ave your tea, and I'll see if I can't find a bit of cold puddin' somewheres for your trouble," as he did accordin', and seemed to enjoy it, as don't look over-fed, and 'owever can he be with no father, and 'er got to make 'er livin' out of them chambers, and 'im only a-earnin' six shillins' a week as office boy to three gents as is a-studyin' for to be made

Judges, as is tedious work a-waitin' for it, thro' none of 'em ever bein' able to get it till they're well on in 'ears and took to wigs.

So when the boy 'ad done 'is tea, he says, "Mother says if you're a-thinkin' of it, you did ought to be in cort, leastways at the door, by seven, as that's when they'll be opened for to be cleaned."

"Well," I says, "I'll see about it, but do 'ope as that party won't think of scrubbin' them floors, as never can be dry by ten, and will lay up Judge and Jury too with cold, and then it will be a nice job to go on with the trial for them leastways, as must be in a 'orsepitle ward, with all on 'em in bed, and pre'aps the Judge 'isself not able to set up, for these 'ere colds do lay 'old of parties that sewere and werry oftin influenzers as attacks the 'ead and flies to the limbs, with cold water runnin' down the back; so I says, "You may as well mention it to your mother from me, for I should be afraid to go into a damp cort myself, partikler if obligated to get under a bench, as I might be drove to."

I were a-goin' over to Mrs. Padwick Saturday arternoon, thro' a-stoppin' there on the Sunday thro' Brown bein' gone to Brummagem, so I tells 'er as I should be obligated by a cup of tea by 'arf-past six Monday mornin', as I knowed wouldn't

give no trouble, thro' a lodger as breakfasted afore seven.

I 'ad my misgivin's over the weather, for of all the days to be out in, it were that Saturday afore for slush and dirt, and me obligated to walk from the Circus to close agin Edgware Road, and some-'ow a bit of my gownd 'ung down and dabbed my boot behind dreadful, and as to my stockin's, I couldn't rest till I'd got 'em off, for they was that beplastered all up the back, and the rain a-drenchin' me all the time, as seemed a-drivin' in my face whichever way I turned, and my umbreller a-blowin' inside out at every corner as I come to.

Monday mornin' were a thick fog, leastways the Edgware Road were, as is why I went down to Westminster underground, tho' full late, for that dratted gal never called me, thro' the lodger bein' out of town from Saturday till Monday, so in course didn't want 'is breakfast early.

It were close on nine when I got to that cort and the weather a-clearin' off except the river as we re all fog.

When I got to the iron gates as leads to that Co'rt, there was some perlice, as I nat'ral asked if they knowed a party as cleaned out the cort, any one in the name of Malkin, as denied all knowledge on 'er and said as the co'rts was all swep' and cleaned a-Saturday, as I says in course they would

be nat'ral, tho' I says "I 'ave lost my chance, as were a place on a bench."

So says the perlice, "'Ave you got a ticket?"

I says, "No, but a letter, as is for the Judge, and that partikler as he did ought to 'ave it afore ever the cort opins."

"Then," he says, "look out for his secketery, as 'll give it 'im."

I says, "All right," cos I didn't want to tell 'im as I meant for to give it into 'is own 'ands, and then he couldn't deny it, nor say arterwards as he didn't get it in time, nor nothink like that for a escuse, as we're all glad on sometimes.

Well, there was a good many got a-getherin. about them gates as I got a-standin' close to till past ten o'clock, when a werry nice young gentleman come up as I knowed well, and says to me, "Mrs. Brown, 'ow do you do? are you a-goin' in?"

I says, "Don't I wish I may get it."

"Oh!" he says, "we'll see;" and if he didn't take and talk to them perlice like a father, as were reg'lar open sessyme, as the sayin' is, and into the cort I got.

Law bless you, my troubles wasn't over then, cos I'd got to get into another cort, as were thro' a narrer doorway, as give me frightful squeezy work, jest like a lot of ladies as they do say was all relations, and many on 'em reg'lar carridge

folks, as shows as that there Barrernite were a butcher any'ow.

I knowed as I couldn't never stop werry long, so didn't go fur into the cort, but stopped in the passage, leastways would have done but for parties as come in with 'eavy tin boxes, as they said was all the case, but couldn't pass me, so had to be jammed in a corner for them to get by, as were dreadful serougin', and the 'ook of a umbreller in my back 'air werry near took off the lot, not as I wears no more chinyon than is jest enuf to keep my bonnet on.

Well, the cort kep' a-fillin' up werry rapid, and lots of gents in wigs and gownds, as is all a-goin' to be Judges in time, so is learnin' the trade.

Then the Jury come in, as looked werry 'aggard, poor fellers, tho' in course all the better for their 'ollyday, as Christmas always is, and do 'ope as they've been and seen a pantermine, as I'm told is wonderful worth while a-seein', and not been a-readin' of this 'ere trial over and over agin all the time.

At last in come the Judge 'isself, as looked the picter of 'ealth, but not dressed in 'is pink, as the 'unters calls it.

He looked werry cheerful over it, and they do say brought the Dook of Wellin'ton along with

'im, as will show parties as he don't mean to stand no nonsense.

I knowed as it wouldn't be no good a-givin' of my letter to them ushers, as one on 'em wanted to take away my chair as I got, but stuck to it as long as I could, though obligated to wacate it, as the sayin' is, thro' me a-fillin' up all of the passage with it.

I don't think as ever I felt more stifley in my life, and in course wanted to keep it dark, as I were there, and 'ad told my young friend not for to pertend to know me, cos there was lots of them noospapers all over the place, as I knowed would take and report me in a minit.

So I makes up my mind as I'd slip out on the quiet as soon as I'd give my letter.

The fust words as that Judge said were about a letter bein' read, as showed 'im to be that partikler over 'em, so I says to a werry nice lookin' gent, "'Ere's a letter for 'im as I can't get near to give 'im," I says, "do 'and it up."

So he says, "All right," and 'ands it on to another, a-sayin, "Pass it up," and as soon as I 'eard that I managed for to wriggle thro' the parties as were a-standin' agin the door and out I gets, a-thinkin' as he must read it now and can't go a-sendin' on it back, cos I ain't put no address.

Not as he'll want to, cos I've give 'im a 'int or two all about them Ortins, as he can send for the ole family, and jest ask 'em plain, "Is that 'im or not," as would settle that pint, not but wot I've a letter from that party, leastways Brown 'ave, as is quite a different person to the party as I took 'im to be, and as I says, he were certingly werry much changed, and the party as I meant I 'ear is a-starvin' so can't be that lusty.

And now as I've see the case started fair agin I shan't lose sight on it of course, partikler if that Judge should want to ask me a civil question or two over my letter, in course I shall answer like the lady, tho' they can't escept as I shall set in that cort day arter day, and whyever should I when I can read it all at 'ome over meals.

And all as I can say is as I wishes 'em well thro' it, judge and jury too, poor dears, as must be a 'ard trial for 'em, but it's a long lane as 'ave no turnin' as the sayin' is, so let's 'ope as somethink will turn up for to settle it, for I'm sure the worrets as it 'ave give me is downright dreadful, and to think as that young Boulten were all a trick of 'isn, a young willin, for I went to see 'is mother, as never sent 'im to me, nor yet never dreamt of me a-gettin' under no bench for to listen, well a-know-in' as I am too much the lady for to stoop to any sich low ways, as he'll come to a bad end 'isself,

that boy will for certing, to be up to such deceit at 'is age, as is wot he never learnt of them lawyers as he's with in the Temple, cos we all knows as they are a noble lot, and all open and above board, or else wouldn't never be fit for judges, nor yet juries neither, as they all may 'ope to come to.

THE END.

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